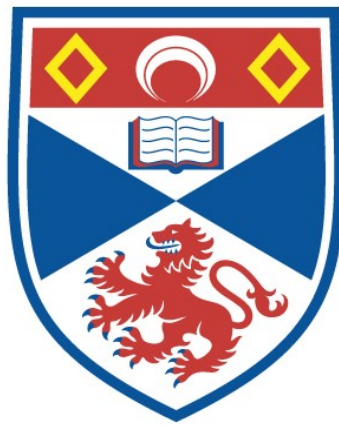


# THE IMAGE OF THE MOON IN GOETHE'S WORKS

John Rosser Williams

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews



1968

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THE IMAGE OF THE MOON IN GOETHE'S WORKS

by

JOHN ROSSER WILLIAMS

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the University of St. Andrews  
on 1st February, 1968



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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own composition, that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself, and that it has not been presented, in part or in whole, in any previous application for a higher degree.




## STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

This thesis is the result of research undertaken in the University of Heidelberg from 1961 to 1962, in the University of Manchester from 1962 to 1964, and in the University of St. Andrews from 1964 to 1967.

I was admitted as a research student and as candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts of the University of St. Andrews in October 1964 under Ordinance General No. 12, and in May 1965 under Ordinance General No. 16.

## CERTIFICATE

I certify that John B. Williams has fulfilled the conditions of the Ordinances and Regulations pertaining to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews, and that he is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.



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## PREFACE

This study is offered as a contribution to the understanding of Goethe's metaphorical and symbolic thought and expression, a comprehensive study of which has yet to be made, and which, in view of the scope of the subject, seems likely to remain limited to such partial contributions. The problems of definition and methodology involved in a study of metaphor and symbol are considerable; for this reason a good deal of time has been devoted to these problems in my introductory chapter.

I should like to express my thanks to the Librarians and staff of the libraries of the Universities of Heidelberg, Manchester and St. Andrews, of the Manchester Central Reference Library, the Bodleian Library and the British Museum; and to the administrators of the Goethe-Wörterbuch in Berlin, Hamburg and Tübingen, who have saved me an immense amount of time and energy in the compilation of material.

I also gratefully acknowledge the patient interest and encouragement of teachers, friends and colleagues, to whom this thesis owes more than they might realise. In particular, I have to thank Professor I.F. Parry,



of Manchester University, for his early encouragement, Mr. E.E. Papst, of Southampton University, for his most valuable opinion and enthusiasm, and my supervisor, Mr. E.V.K. Brill, of St. Andrews University, for his unfailing support and direction during the composition of this thesis.

It will be clear to any reader of this study how much it owes, in detail and in its general direction, to the initiative of the work of Professor Emil Staiger, to whom I should finally like to record a debt of gratitude and enthusiasm.



## ABBREVIATIONS

Goethe's works (see Bibliography):

<u>WA</u>	<u>Weimarer Ausgabe</u>
<u>JA</u>	<u>Jubiläumsausgabe</u>
<u>HA</u>	<u>Hamburger Ausgabe</u>
<u>AA</u>	<u>Artemis Ausgabe</u>

Diss.      Dissertation

Periodicals:

<u>ChdWGV</u>	<u>Chronik des Wiener Goethe-Vereins</u>
<u>DVLG</u>	<u>Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literatur- wissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte</u>
<u>GJb</u>	<u>Goethe-Jahrbuch</u>
<u>Goethe</u>	<u>Neue Folge des Jahrbuchs der Goethe-Gesellschaft</u>
<u>GQ</u>	<u>German Quarterly</u>
<u>GRM</u>	<u>Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift</u>
<u>JdGG</u>	<u>Jahrbuch der Goethe-Gesellschaft</u>
<u>JdGdH</u>	<u>Jahrbuch des freien deutschen Hochstifts</u>
<u>JEGP</u>	<u>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</u>
<u>MLN</u>	<u>Modern Language Notes</u>
<u>MLQ</u>	<u>Modern Language Quarterly</u>
<u>NLR</u>	<u>Modern Language Review</u>
<u>NJWJ</u>	<u>Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Jugend- bildung</u>
<u>NR</u>	<u>Die neue Rundschau</u>
<u>PEGS</u>	<u>Publications of the English Goethe Society</u>
<u>PMLA</u>	<u>Publications of the Modern Language Society of America</u>
<u>SdpJ</u>	<u>Schriftenreihe der preussischen Jahrbücher</u>
<u>ZfAuk</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunst- wissenschaft</u>
<u>ZdA</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur</u>
<u>ZdB</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für deutsche Bildung</u>
<u>ZdP</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie</u>

All other periodical publications are quoted in full.

Note:

In references to editions of Goethe's works in the text and footnotes, the following system has been observed:



WA is followed by a Roman numeral indicating the section of the Weimar edition, then by an Arabic numeral indicating the volume, and finally by another Arabic numeral indicating the page, thus: WA.I.1.100.

JA, HA and AA are followed by an Arabic numeral indicating the volume, then by another Arabic numeral indicating the page, thus: JA.1.100.

In quotations from Goethe's works, the orthography and punctuation of the Weimar edition has been preserved when quoting from the scientific writings, diaries and letters (i.e. from sections II, III and IV); I have avoided the use of gic in those cases where orthography departs from modern usage. When quoting from the creative works, the text of the Artemis edition has been followed even where the references given are to other editions - except in the case of Urfant, where the text used is that of the Blackwell edition by L.A. Willoughby.



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## Chapter One: Introduction

1. Foreword: The Scope of Imagery
2. The Study of Imagery: Method and Approach
3. The Moon as a Poetic Image
4. The Study of Goethe's Moon-Imagery



## 1. The Scope of Imagery

The central importance of imagery in the work of a poet is clear enough, if only from the amount of critical literature which has appeared on the subject, and especially from the renewed interest in the study of imagery and its methods during the last thirty years or so. In his book on the poetic image, C. Day Lewis quotes at random remarks made by both critics and poets on the importance of imagery. Herbert Read: "We should always be prepared to judge a poet ... by the force and originality of his metaphors"; Aristotle: "The greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius"; Dryden: "Imaging is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry." At the same time, Lewis claims that imagery has not always enjoyed such critical esteem: "The idea that imagery is at the core of the poem, that a poem may itself be an image composed from a multiplicity of images, did not begin to have any wide official currency until the Romantic Movement." But he concludes his book



with words which indicate that the image, and the need to express himself in images, are among the poet's most basic stock-in-trade:

The eternal spirit's eternal pastime -- i  
Shaping, reshaping.

Amongst contemporary German scholars in England, Professor Closs similarly sees the image as the central point, the Urzelle in the organism of the work of art<sup>2</sup>. And Professor Willoughby, to whose valuable and stimulating essay<sup>3</sup> I am much indebted, quotes Goethe as saying that language itself is but a matter of symbols and images<sup>4</sup>, and stresses the very derivation of the English and German terms, image < imago, imitare, and bilden < Bild.

The exact nature of metaphor as a means of communication and expression, poetic or otherwise, is a problem which has occupied theoreticians, philosophers, linguists, psychologists and creative writers. For metaphor, as Middleton Murry says in his essay on the subject, is as ultimate as speech, and speech itself as ultimate as thought. He speaks of the "imperious need" of the creative mind to impart life to the lifeless, to see similarity in the dissimilar, to assimilate the unfamiliar to the familiar and the unknown to the



known; to give "to airy nothing a local habitation and a name", so that it ceases to be airy nothing and becomes a part of the shared experience of men's thought<sup>5</sup>. This is, roughly and from one point of view, the function of metaphor, a function so necessary and so basic that, as Emerson says, "to attempt a fundamental examination of metaphor would be nothing less than an investigation of the genesis of thought itself"<sup>6</sup>. Middleton Murry also suggests that "the investigation of metaphor ... cannot be pursued very far without our being led to the borderline of sanity"<sup>7</sup>.

Fortunately, it is not the purpose of this study to attempt a rigorous or exhaustive definition of "imagery", whether in the form of simile, metaphor, motif or symbol. We could take remarks from a whole range of writers, from Aristotle<sup>8</sup>, Coleridge<sup>9</sup>, or Stanford<sup>10</sup>, and still be as far as ever from a really satisfactory definition of the nature of metaphor. Such a definition might appear to be necessary if an absolute distinction were to be drawn between "image" (in its narrower sense) and "metaphor", or between the various other forms of imagery; but for our purpose a working definition, as opposed to a theoretical one, is needed, which will act as an aid to the study of these forms. Empirically, it may be possible to suggest where image becomes



metaphor, metaphor becomes motif, motif becomes symbol, or whether a certain image is used symbolically or allegorically; theoretically, the ground is for the most part so vague, the terms overlap to such an extent, that an ultimate distinction is virtually impossible.

Wellek and Warren take just this attitude towards the definition of the various forms of imagery: "The semantic difficulties of our topic are troublesome, and no ready relief seems possible beyond constant vigilant attention to how terms are used in their contexts, and especially to their polar oppositions" <sup>11</sup>. As they point out further, the image may exist as "description" or as "metaphor" -- it may be simply the faithful reproduction of a perception, visual or auditory, olfactory or sensory, of the outside world, or it may refer to something other than the immediate perception, thus linking perception and conception in the metaphorical recognition of similarity in the dissimilar, of unity in multiplicity, of two different points of view in one idea, etc. Middleton Murry suggests <sup>12</sup> that "image" could be used as a term which includes both image and metaphor, except that the word image, by its very derivation, tends to emphasise unduly the part played by the visual image. However, as he continues, the image may be visual, auditory, or it may refer to a primary physical experience, or it may be "wholly psychological", referr-



ing one emotion or intellectual experience to another:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies 13  
When a new planet swims into his ken.

Thus, although the use of the word image in its very strictest sense would exclude all but the concrete and visual image or picture, which was only presentation and not representation, there is much to be said for an extension of its meaning. Indeed, if the semantic associations of the word were ignored, or at least not applied too rigorously, that is, if the image is not regarded as solely or even predominantly visual, then "image" could be used as a general term to include simile and metaphor, and indeed motif and symbol. Such an extension would appear further justified if we consider the distinction between metaphor and symbol.

This distinction is hardly expressed satisfactorily by the etymological explanation referring to the derivations of the two words, meta, over, phero, carry, and symballein, to throw together<sup>14</sup>. If we were required to define symbol, we might say that in the symbol meaning and image "fall together", but (as distinct from metaphor) the meaning of the image extends far beyond the scope of the image itself; as Goethe puts it, "das die Idee im Bild immer unendlich wirksam



und unerreichbar bleibt" (WA.I.48.206). In other words, where metaphor only brings perception and idea, image and meaning, into close connexion with each other (each element, vehicle and tenor, retaining its basic identity when considered out of the particular context), the symbol gives the image a life of its own, so to speak, by virtue of the "cluster of associations" given to it by common usage and consent; as for example the Christian symbol of the Cross has accumulated and absorbed a whole wealth of association and meaning which extends far beyond its original, immediate significance.

Turning to the poetic symbol<sup>15</sup>, we notice that one of the essential features of a symbol as it appears in the work of a given writer is the very frequency, and even regularity, with which it occurs. This has been recognised by many critics -- again, Wellek and Warren point out: "Is there any important sense in which 'symbol' differs from 'image' and 'metaphor'? Primarily, we think, in the recurrence and persistence of the 'symbol'. An 'image' may be evoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently occurs, both as presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol, may even become part of a symbolic (or mythic) system"<sup>16</sup>. The same critics quote Yeats's essay on Shelley:

"One finds in his poetry, besides innumerable



images which have not the definiteness of symbols, many images that are certainly symbols, and as the years went by he began to use these with more and more deliberately symbolic purpose" 17.

Moreover, Wellek and Warren conclude, the "normal procedure" in this process is (naturally enough) "the turning of images into metaphors and metaphors into symbols" 18.

However facile this distinction between metaphor and symbol on the grounds of their very similarity might seem to the theoretician whose definition of the two would be concerned with stressing their essential difference, its advantage as a "working definition" for the critic who wishes to study the imagery, both metaphor and symbol, of a certain poet, is immediately clear. Certainly, it would mean extending the term "imagery" to include simile, metaphor and symbol (and other related forms); but in following the images of a poet through his works it would allow us to examine them both in their context and in their relationship to each other, and to see in his metaphors the gradual accumulation of association and experience which goes to make up his "private symbolism". This in turn would afford possibilities of interpretation which would be lacking in the examination of a particular symbol or metaphor taken on its own, whether in or out



of its immediate context. In some cases, this "private symbolism" may be less important than the more general or "traditional" symbolism on which the poet draws; indeed, these two types are so intimately related that it is difficult or impossible to distinguish them in practice. At all events, both are important elements in the formation of his images and symbols, and hence of the core of his poetry.

For practical purposes, then, the term "imagery" can be used to include and cover image, simile, metaphor, symbol -- and allegory. For however important, again, the difference between symbol and allegory, their close association -- and in many cases their confusion -- is a sign that they are only too closely related. Again, it may be easier to distinguish these in practice than in theory, but for the time being the following distinction must be made. With the symbol, the image does not express one thing or idea, but holds within it the possibility of a whole number of varying, if related, interpretations; the image does not exhaust itself in the expression of one meaning. With allegory, on the other hand, A (the image) equals B (its meaning), and nothing more; the image is exhausted by one clear interpretation. C.S. Lewis insists on the distinction where we have not<sup>19</sup>; and Goethe also distinguishes between



the limited possibility of interpretation in allegory and the endless possibility (or the very impossibility) of interpretation in symbolism:

Die Allegorie verwandelt die Erscheinung in einen Begriff, den Begriff in ein Bild, doch so, das der Begriff im Bilde immer noch begrenzt und vollständig zu halten und zu haben und an denselben auszusprechen sei.

Die Symbolik verwandelt die Erscheinung in Idee, die Idee in ein Bild, und so, das die Idee im Bild immer unendlich wirksam und unerreichbar bleibt, und, selbst in allen Sprachen ausgesprochen, doch unaussprechlich bleibe. (WA.I.48.205-6)

To resume, therefore, it is intended for the purposes of this study to use the term imagery to cover the field of poetic perception and expression that lies between the simple image, auditory, visual or otherwise; the simile, which we may define as linking two terms, which the poet feels to be associated, by means of comparison; the metaphor, which consists in associating image and idea in such a way that their similarity should strike us with particular effect -- "that it should have lain hitherto unperceived, or but rarely perceived by us, so that it comes to us with an effect of revelation" <sup>20</sup>, the symbol, which is an image or metaphor used with such persistence and recurrence in a poet's work -- that is, as a motif or even as a leitmotif -- that it accrues a



wealth and depth of association and meaning which is evoked by the employment of the image alone; and allegory, which is the representation of an abstract notion (wealth, truth, love, chastity) by means of a (usually) concrete image, whereby the relationship between notion and image is a clearly defined, often arbitrary, one-for-one correspondence<sup>21</sup>. It is hardly abusing the meaning of the word "image" if it is taken to include all these terms; for once we extend its use beyond the visual, concrete picture, we have exceeded the strict sense of the word. In spite of the fact that the poet, and particularly our poet, Goethe, perceives and expresses himself visually, it would be an undue limitation to restrict the term to such an extent.

## 2. The Study of Imagery

The study of imagery, and the critical method to be adopted towards it, poses even more problems than the definition of its terms. In order to reach some conclusion on how this problem may be approached, it would seem advisable first to survey some of the methods adopted in the past, and more particularly those adopted during the last thirty years or so of imagery research.



Roughly, these methods fall into the following categories: the interpretation of images through their subject-matter, or content; interpretation through their form; the interpretation of images regarded as a guide to the poet's subconscious mind, in which his images and symbols are seen as primordial or archetypal images which well up spontaneously from the depths of his own psyche, and which are expressions either of the collective unconscious of the human race, in a Jungian sense, or else of the poet's own repressed ambitions and desires, in a Freudian sense; and finally the "organic" interpretation of images, in which neither the content nor the form of the image, nor the psychological implications, are altogether ignored, but which concentrates fully on assessing the image within its immediate context and also within the context of the poet's work as a whole. These four methods are, for the sake of argument, rather arbitrarily categorised; clearly, they must overlap to a certain extent. But, with a few notable exceptions, most imagery research has restricted itself to acknowledging one of these methods as its leading principle.

The first method, now largely discredited, is normally limited to the statistical amassing and categorising of images based on their common subject-matter, usually for the purpose of deducing biographical information from the "evidence" thus obtained. Naturally enough, the



poet to suffer most from this kind of approach is Shakespeare; as Professor Willoughby has pointed out <sup>22</sup>, the mass of diaries, letters, reports and conversations by and about Goethe has (or should have) relieved students of Goethe of the besetting preoccupation of hunters after biographical data, and allowed them to devote their attention to the "aesthetic organisation" behind the poet's imagery.

The biographical approach to the study of a poet's work is by no means new; as Wellek and Warren show, Dr. Johnson had already written scathingly of an admirer of Thomson's poems:

"She could gather from his works three parts of his character: that he was a great lover, a great swimmer, and rigorously abstinent; but ... he knows not any love but that of the sex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himself in all the luxury that comes within his reach" <sup>23</sup>.

Such a method is based on the assumption that the poet must personally have experienced, physically or mentally, all the emotions and experiences we find expressed in his works -- if, that is, he is to be considered to have expressed them with any conviction or sincerity <sup>24</sup>; that a musician, for example, must be sad to write a funeral march, or gay to write a scherzo; that Verdi, perhaps, experienced a (temporary) conversion to profound



religious conviction in order to write the Requiem; that Shakespeare must have been addicted to roasted crabs in order to write so enthusiastically about them; or that he must have spent a considerable time at sea<sup>25</sup>. We might equally say, on the basis of the West-Östliche Divan, that Goethe must have travelled extensively in the Middle East; and Professor Willoughby has scolded critics for attempting to read the development of Goethe's erotic relationship with Frau von Stein into his use of the image of the Becher<sup>26</sup>. Perhaps the most neatly-formulated objection to this assumption is Ellen Terry's remark that on these criteria, Shakespeare, in order to have written what he did write, must have been a woman<sup>27</sup>.

A leading exponent of the statistical, or biographical study of imagery based on its content is Caroline Spurgeon, whose book<sup>28</sup> appeared in 1935. Before one objects to Miss Spurgeon's approach, one must remember that she has done great service to the study of imagery in that she was among the first of recent critics seriously to pose questions of methodology in this field. She has done this more effectively, perhaps, in an earlier essay<sup>29</sup>, where she is concerned less with the accumulation of biographical data about Shakespeare's interests (gardening, love of sport, nature, etc.) than with the attempt to analyse the dramatic function of images within a play --



i.e. the part played by recurrent images in raising and sustaining emotion, in providing atmosphere or in emphasising themes. For example, she concludes that in Romeo and Juliet the dominant images are those of light and shade, and in Hamlet those of disease and decay. This approach is still largely statistical and based on the subject-matter of the images, but it has another, and more valuable purpose than the purely biographical approach adopted in much of her book.

Lillian Hornstein in particular has challenged the criteria on which Miss Spurgeon's biographical conclusions are based. Miss Hornstein produces the (not altogether conclusive) evidence that in Isaak Walton's Life of Donne, for example, there is not a single fishing image to be found; and she blames Miss Spurgeon not so much for drawing biographical conclusions on the basis of positive evidence, as for drawing such conclusions on the basis of negative evidence. For example, the conclusion that since Shakespeare used few fishing-images, he had little interest in fishing, and consequently that he was of an essentially non-meditative nature; or, perhaps more far-fetched, that Shakespeare's predilection for images of unfettered flight, wings, etc., "indicate a reaction from ... long years in an Elizabethan gaol" 30.

The following passage from Miss Hornstein's article



would appear to close the subject of statistical biography-hunting through images: "It is admitted [by the majority of critical opinion] that an artist can employ with what we now feel to be superb realism a figure clearly not traceable to the personal environment. On the strength of this admission, logically it can be concluded that no figure is necessarily dependent on environmental experience. On the negative side, the absence of an image is presumed to indicate lack of knowledge and experience. This inference would require, as a matter of logic, proof first that all those that had certain experience used the correlative images ... It must first be proved by the collectors of statistics in metaphor that such comparisons do not circulate in the general current of trite proverb and comparison from which all daily speech draws, or as a literary residuum from secondary sources" <sup>31</sup>.

However, the examination of imagery based on its content is not restricted to Miss Spurgeon alone. Wilhelm Emrich, who militates strongly against this approach, has dealt at length with the problem of image and symbol study in two articles <sup>32</sup>, and in the introduction to his book on the symbols of Faust II <sup>33</sup>. In the latter, particularly, he deals with the difficulties and problems of the various methods of interpretation mentioned above.



Discussing some previous attempts at the study of imagery based on content, he dismisses them (rather harshly) as "meist äußerliche Materialsammlung" <sup>34</sup>. Clearly, this is the great danger of image or symbol study based on content alone; that the critic will be content to collect and tabulate a number of images which have nothing in common but their subject-matter, and will deal with them on that basis. Such an approach has value only if an attempt is made to see these images as a part of an organic whole, part of the unity and totality of a particular work, or of the poet's whole work.

Before returning to this point, however, the two methods based on form and on psychological or psycho-analytical criteria must be examined. The formal approach, the examination and (sometimes) the classification of imagery based on considerations of style, language, metre, etc., has, on the whole, represented an attempt to avoid the confusions of content-interpretation -- "Die vielen sich widersprechenden, mehr oder minder geistvollen Gehaltsinterpretationen" <sup>35</sup>. This method, with its claim to an "objective" rather than a "subjective" critical approach, has enjoyed a vogue in recent years in keeping with the trends in modern criticism. Even so, the question of the validity -- or, more fairly, of the limitations -- of such an approach may be raised.



As early as 1924, H.W. Wells's study<sup>36</sup> attempted a classification of images which claimed to be descriptive rather than evaluative; Wells arranges images into seven types according to their structure -- that is, according to the relationship between vehicle and tenor; his types are the Decorative, Sunken, Violent or Fustian, Radical, Intensive, Expansive and Exuberant Image. But in showing that his classification is a largely descriptive and technical one, Wells indicates that such an "objective" study is strictly limited, and that such definitions are at best a means to an end: "The purpose of establishing a type of metaphor is to illustrate the ... potentialities of metaphorical thought"; that is, from a purely technical study of metaphorical types, one can gain fresh evidence "on the garrulous and platitudinous mind of Lyly; on the sober mind of Daniel; on the vigorous but sensational mind of Kydd; on the passionate, analytical and introspective nature of Donne, ... etc." And Wells concludes his survey of method with the admission that such a descriptive study is in fact a means to an evaluative one: "So narrow and precise a rule as metaphorical study may still be of assistance in measuring the minds and hearts of men" 37.

So we are led back to Emrich's conclusion that the most useful function of form-analysis in image-study is



that it can often corroborate and justify the conclusions of content-analysis more authoritatively than the latter could on its own terms<sup>38</sup>. More recently, Christine Brooke-Rose<sup>39</sup> has produced an admirable and exhaustive "grammar of metaphor", in which she undertakes to study metaphor from a purely objective and formal standpoint. "The comparison merely states that A is like B, never that A is B. In metaphor, B can replace A altogether, leaving us to guess it, or it can be linked to A by an enormous variety of complex grammatical and syntactical means of expression"<sup>40</sup>, and it is this "enormous variety of means of expression" that Miss Brooke-Rose sets out to define and tabulate, taking as her main divisions noun-metaphor, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition-metaphor, etc., and examining the grammatical relationships of these types under the headings: Simple Replacement, Pointing Formulae (demonstrative expression, parallelism, apposition, vocative), Copula, Genitive Link, et al. As she herself points out, this method of image-analysis has its severe limitations, and she fully recognises the temptation to apply subjective evaluations over and above her wholly objective criteria, to the extent of falling into the subjective trap herself. For example, she regards the attribution of actions to inanimate things as "more poetic" than to persons of any kind; and "most



poetic of all" is the attribution of non-human action to a thing, "because no human action is involved, even implicitly (except the poet)" <sup>41</sup>.

It would seem, then, that the examination of imagery based on formal criteria alone avoids the subjective confusion and evaluative vagueness only by the stringent imposition of limitations on the critical conclusions it reaches; we have the impression that at times the formalists cast an envious eye at the evaluators, and only by an effort of will remain within their self-imposed limits. Further, however, such an approach remains largely categorical, even statistical; it tabulates and classifies without reaching conclusions other than those which can be expressed by enumeration <sup>42</sup>. The third method of image-analysis swings the pendulum quite the other way, and its aims have more in common with content-analysis.

Basing their approach on the theories of Jung, or to a lesser extent on those of Freud, critics have interpreted a poet's images as revelations of his psyche, either in that they are explained on the same basis as dream-images in the Freudian sense, as expressions of the repressed desires and ambitions of the poet, or in that they are explained on the basis of Jung's theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious -- as primordial



images welling up from the reservoir of human experience which is the inheritance of every living person. They are the images through which the archetype, itself not representable except as an image, i.e. indirectly, is given form; archetypes form the basis of myth and folklore, and, as Jung says, they "require interpreting ever anew" <sup>43</sup>. It is from this source, then, that the poet draws for his images and symbols; they form themselves involuntarily and spontaneously, without the mediation of the conscious mind.

A representative of this critical approach is Maud Bodkin <sup>44</sup>, who examines poetic images and motifs in the light of the thesis that the special emotional significance of certain poems goes beyond any definite or definable meaning conveyed by that poem, and is due to "the stirring within the reader's mind of unconscious forces", known as primordial images or archetypes. These images have their origin in "the psychic residua of numberless experiences of the same type" that have happened, not to the individual alone, but to his ancestors, the results of which are inherited in the structure of the brain, and which are the a priori determinants of individual experience <sup>45</sup>.

It is not the place here, nor the purpose, to assess either Jung's or Freud's contribution to analytical



psychology, nor to examine the merits of their respective theories. We are concerned with showing not the fallacy, but rather the inadequacy, of a method of criticism based on such an approach alone. The first objection that can be made is that this method falls into the same trap as the assessment of images in terms of biographical criteria -- in fact, critics sometimes manage to combine the two, with varying degrees of success<sup>46</sup>. That is, such critics assume "that the poet's imagery is the central contribution of his unconscious and that in it, therefore, the poet speaks as a man, not as an artist"<sup>47</sup>.

Konrad Burdach, who restricts his interpretations to recognisable antecedents, whether biographical, historical or mythological, is less radical than some; Pongs goes as far as to reject the aesthetic interpretation of imagery outright, describing the poet who uses images as individually significant as being under an aesthetic delusion, and warning against "die Gefahr, die der schöne Schein des Ksthetischen für die Wahrheit der Existenz bedeutet"<sup>48</sup>. Citing Vico -- "Jede Metapher ist ein kleiner Mythos" -- Pongs asserts that poetic images are a manifestation of the same creative faculty that formed myth, and should be treated as such; each metaphor, unique in itself, springs from a common background: "Urbilder bieten sich [dem Poeten] dar, in die er die



Grundlage seiner Weltauffassung hineininformen kann" <sup>49</sup>.

The second part of Goethe's Faust, naturally, has attracted more than its share of such interpretation, notably in the studies by Kerényi and Danckert <sup>50</sup>. Erich attacks Kerényi in particular for stressing the similarity, rather than the essential difference between Goethe's related symbols, as for example in his interpretation of Mignon, Knabe Wagenlenker, Homunculus and Euphorion in terms of ancient child-god myths; Erich points out that this method runs the risk of reading new, and foreign, symbols into the poet's original image: "erst nach einer genauen Bestimmung der Differenz zwischen den Symbolen könnte ein Vergleich fruchtbar und aufhellend wirken" <sup>51</sup>. Danckert's theory of the resurgence of Pelagian or Tellurian myths through Goethe's unconscious as an inner protest against the rationalist thought of his day has also been mocked by a recent French critic <sup>52</sup>.

However, we must again distinguish between objections to this mythological or psychoanalytical approach; on the one hand there may be doubts concerning the validity of this approach, and on the other hand doubts as to its adequacy as a literary critical method. Certainly, one cannot question the validity of such an approach without calling into question the very theories on which it is based, and consequently also a major branch of



modern psychology. Here specifically, we might blame certain critics for not drawing a clear enough distinction between the psychological effect of an image or a symbol and its aesthetic effect within a poem<sup>53</sup>. But apart from such specific objections, the main argument against this approach seems to be that given by Erich, namely, that it is not satisfactory to interpret the images and symbols of poetry in terms of other non-poetic, though related, images and symbols<sup>54</sup>. If the poetic symbol, essentially a means of artistic expression, is interpreted exclusively in terms of psychoanalytical dream-symbols, or mythological or religious symbols, it is no longer being treated on its own terms, but is being compared; and by this comparison we obscure the poetic image behind analogies. "Dichtung aber verharrt in Besonderen, im Bild", claims Erich, and the images of poetry lose their individuality, and hence much of their artistic value, when translated into general or abstract concepts: "... denn sie stehen nicht stellvertretend ein für etwas Allgemeines, sondern enthalten bereits in sich selbst das Wesenhafte, das sie ausdrücken" <sup>55</sup>.

Apart from this objection, however, the method of approach which studies imagery as an unconscious revelation of the poet's mind can be rejected largely on grounds of its inadequacy, of what it fails to deal with. Indeed,



the part played by the unconscious in the process of artistic creation was recognised by Goethe: "Der Mensch kann nicht lange in bewussten Zustände ... verharren, er muß sich wieder ins Unbewusstsein flüchten, denn darin lebt seine Wurzel" <sup>56</sup>. We must only be careful not to go too far in our assumption of the rôle of the unconscious in the formulation of a poet's imagery; as Professor Willoughby points out, Goethe himself was at the same time fully aware of the import of his images, and that they were "no unwitting betrayal of the furniture of his mind" <sup>57</sup>. The poet uses his images with deliberate subtlety of intention, and is himself deeply aware of the symbolising activity of his mind, the purpose of which is, finally, to express thought directly and immediately, without the intervention of explicitly conceptual processes.

This is the main objection to those critics who see in imagery in general, and in Goethe's imagery in particular, only "la floraison de l'inconscient, l'archétype porté par un sens dionysiaque de l'existence" <sup>58</sup> -- the fact that they ignore as much as they take into account, that, to a greater or lesser extent, they concentrate on the revelation of the poet's (or the man's) psyche behind his images, and either pass over the aesthetic effect of the image, its place as a unit in an organised work of art, or reject it outright as a delusion <sup>59</sup>.



Wilhelm Erich shows, moreover, with particular references to Goethe<sup>60</sup>, that in spite of distinct analogies with archetypal or mythological antecedents, the symbols of Goethe's later poetry grow directly out of the perspective of his development as a poet and his mental conflicts, and that they continually undergo new changes; psychoanalytical interpretation ignores precisely what it is the task of literary criticism to investigate, namely, the originality of the poet, the uniqueness of his symbols and the newly-acquired significance he gives them. Moreover, in Goethe's case it would seem more than usually ill-advised to subject his "primordial" symbols to psychoanalytical interpretation, since in Faust II. especially, he is often using mythology ironically and wilfully for his own ends, almost plagiarising it. Again, recent research<sup>61</sup> has made it clear that many of the apparently "archetypal" alchemical symbols and motifs used by Goethe (hermaphroditism, elemental symbols, gold and silver symbolism, etc.), far from welling up uncontrolled from his subconscious, are part of the educational inheritance of the 18th century, and form part of a well-known tradition.

Having examined three principal methods of image-study, all of which were found in some way lacking, or



incomplete, we must turn to the search for a positive approach to the subject. Wellek and Warren point out the problem; modern criticism, in all fields, feels the tension between the old divisive components of "form" and "matter": "The Scotch rhetorician, writing at the end of the Neo-Classical period, rather naturally thought of similes and metaphors as calculated, elected; today's analysts, working after Freud, are disposed to see all images as revelatory of the unconscious. It calls for a nice equilibrium to avoid the rhetorical concern on the one hand and on the other hand both psychological biography and 'message-hunting'" <sup>62</sup>.

The task of the study of imagery, then, is to reveal the uniqueness and originality of an image within the context of the poem, or work, in which it has its roots. In a full study of imagery, historical, mythological and psychoanalytical criteria will have to play their part, as will criteria based on both the form and content of the image. Even the much-censured and abused biographical approach, used with care, will have its relevance<sup>63</sup>; all these methods are valid, and even valuable, but only in so far as they serve to explain and evaluate the unique and specific relevance of the image within its context.

Professor Willoughby pleads for such an approach:



the significance of poetic imagery cannot be abstracted from the formal relations it has within its immediate context<sup>64</sup>. And Wolfgang Clemen, as early as 1936, set out on a different path from Miss Spurgeon, and in a masterly analysis of Shakespeare's imagery illustrates his "organic" method of image-study<sup>65</sup>. Isolated from its context, the image is only "half an image"; it gains life and significance only from its context. This is surely what Coleridge means when he says, "Images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, do not of themselves characterise the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion, or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion"<sup>66</sup>. Rightly enough, C. Day Lewis insists on a closer definition of the word "passion", showing that it is here not meant as "emotion" (i.e. that images are suitable vehicles for love, hate, fear, etc.), but "a unifying theme passionately conceived and passionately developed ... I would distinguish, in fact, between human emotion and poetic passion"<sup>67</sup>.

We might say, then, that it is the "poetic passion" that gives the imagery of a poem its unique significance: the conception, mood, theme and expression of a poem -- that is, all those elements which contribute to the total structure of the poem and provide the indispensable



(intrinsic) context for its images. And it is this above all that must be taken into account when dealing with the images of a poem.

Clemen also shows that the problem of image-study must be considered as one of evolution; that a poet's use of images, the power to associate his imagery intimately with the fabric of his poetry, shows a distinct development in the course of his productive life. This does not imply an investigation of a poet's imagery based on his biographical career, by any means, although the chronological order of his works would seem to be the most suitable point of departure for a study of this kind. Such an examination implies only the recognition that his use of imagery develops and evolves, not always consistently or in a straight line, but distinctly and organically in step with his artistic development. Clearly, the pitfall to be avoided here is the "intentional fallacy"<sup>68</sup> -- the tendency to make a priori assumptions about the development of a poet's work, and to fit the imagery, and its evolution, into this Procrustean bed. But Clemen, for example, has shown very convincingly how Shakespeare's imagery is used in the earlier plays to fulfil relatively simple functions, later to fulfil several important functions, and to play a decisive part in the characterisation of the plays and the expression of



the dramatic theme, until imagery eventually becomes the dramatist's favourite and most skilful means of expression.

The same critic asserts that the study of imagery in drama requires a somewhat different approach from that in lyric poetry; seeing the art of the dramatist as one of "progressive revelation". Clemen shows how each image and metaphor forms a link in the complex chain of drama, and hence that the progress of the dramatic action must be understood in order to appreciate fully the function of the image. But is it so very different in other genres, notably in lyric poetry? Can we fully understand the significance of any one of Goethe's images, for example, without reference to the use of the same image in a different context, or to other images in the same context? To take an example; can the central image of An den Mond be assessed without reference to the use of moon-imagery by Goethe elsewhere in his work -- in Jägers Abendlied, for instance -- or even without reference to a closely related poem in which the image does not explicitly occur, say, Wanderers Nachtlied I? Can the moon-image of An den Mond be assessed without reference to its context, without reference to the other essential image in the poem, that of the river? These two directions, one towards the immediate context, and



the other away from it towards other related images or poems, must surely be followed up when studying the imagery of a lyric poet.

Professor Willoughby, again, has indicated the value of tracing certain "primordial images" through Goethe's work, and has himself examined some of them in two articles<sup>69</sup>. It is true that in his later essay<sup>70</sup>, Willoughby expresses some reservations on the subject of "image-hunting", and stresses more and more that the important thing is to see an image in its context rather than ranging far and wide through literature in search of symbols and images which have only their subject-matter in common. But it remains true, as he says, that Goethe's relatively limited range of symbols leads us to believe that they are indeed primordial symbols (though not in the Jungian sense), and are consequently of considerable significance for his work as a whole -- such images as sun, moon, waves, clouds, water, hut, goblet, horse, etc. These images do not necessarily have any a priori symbolic value; it is only as the reader examines them across Goethe's work, and sees the regularity and persistence with which they are used, that they assume the significance of motifs and their symbolic meaning becomes clear. According to their context, these images are used variously as simile, metaphor, symbol, allegory or even as pure



description, and varying with the context they assume different values. But around one particular image collects a cluster of meaning and significance for the poet -- and for the reader who examines them across his work -- to such an extent that each image must be interpreted with reference to other images as well as to its own context<sup>71</sup>.

Erlich has indicated a similar approach; speaking in particular of Faust II, and in general of Goethe's whole work, he shows that Goethe's symbols can only be fully and properly explained in terms of each other -- that a proper study of Goethe's imagery must be based on a recognition and evaluation of the whole inner structure and network of symbolism in his work, of his "Symbol- und Bildnetz" <sup>72</sup>. The critic must take into account the diversity of Goethe's stages of development, and the changing functions of single images in previous works must be examined. Wolfgang Schadewaldt describes and puts into practice a similar method in an essay comparing the poem Die Narung sankte sich von oben with the four vigils of the elves' chorus in the opening scene of Faust II. He traces the correspondence of images and motifs in the two passages, and speaks of a "Logik der Motive", of certain recurrent images in the poet's work, "die, unabhängig von der künstlerischen Ausgestaltung, es sehr wohl zu unterscheiden erlauben, wo ein Motiv



unmittelbar gewachsen und wo es abgewandelt und einem neuen Zusammenhang dienstbar geworden ist" 73.

This does not mean that the significance of a certain symbol in an earlier work can simply be applied to the same symbol as it appears in a later work. On the contrary, earlier meanings which have become attached to a symbol or image as a result of its setting in a particular context (or contexts) must often be removed from a later image in order that its full meaning may be assessed; only in this way can the uniqueness of an image as it stands be established. The fact remains, nevertheless, that in dealing with Goethe's images we must look both into and beyond the immediate context; not beyond it into antecedents and sources outside Goethe's own work, not necessarily into biographical, mythological antecedents, but into the perspective of Goethe's imagery itself. In this way, perhaps, in the "wiederholte Spiegelung" and "wechselseitige Erhellung" of images in other images, a more solid critical knowledge can be gained; indeed, Goethe himself seems to point to such an approach to his works:

... so habe ich seit langen das  
Mittel gewählt, durch einander gegen-  
übergestellte und sich gleichsam inein-  
ander abspiegelnde Gebilde den geheimen  
Sinn dem Aufmerkenden zu offenbaren.



### 3. The Moon as a Poetic Image

To attempt a comprehensive study of Goethe's imagery, whether on the lines laid down above or not, would clearly be a colossal task. The purpose of the present study is to examine and assess the occurrence of one particular image as it appears across Goethe's works, its frequency, meaning and importance according to its immediate context on the one hand, and its general significance on the other. Such a study, it must be recognised at once, is incomplete and severely limited, and can at best be regarded as a contribution to the whole, in the sense that any particular study or monograph, even one which would embrace the whole of Goethe's imagery, could only be a partial contribution to a total understanding<sup>75</sup>.

The dangers involved in a study of moon-imagery alone are very real; a "nice equilibrium" will have to be maintained between "kuserliche Materialsammlung" and the temptation to read too deeply into the symbolism of the image; between isolating the image from its context, and isolating it from other related images outside the context. Indeed, in view of what has been said above, it may be questioned how far the study of images based



on similarity of subject-matter is valid at all as literary criticism. But this study will neither be exclusively concerned with the subject-matter of the image "moon" (and of those images which are closely related to it within the scope and context of a poem or a series of poems, within the context of a drama or a novel, etc.), nor will it seek to ignore the significance of the subject-matter because of an a priori critical assumption.

The approach to the study of a particular leitmotif in a poet's work must be primarily an empirical one. And though the initial reason for the choice of the image of the moon as the object of the study is that this particular image has major significance for Goethe throughout his works by virtue of its content alone, other important functions of the image must also be examined, namely, its meaning and function within a particular context, its form as an adequate means of expressing the "dominant passion", its general significance in terms of traditional symbolism and psychological effect, its private symbolism for the poet (and the reader), and so on. In short, it is intended to examine the variety of ways in which Goethe uses the image of the moon, and its changing meaning for the poet in the perspective of his oeuvre as a whole. But before dealing more closely with the study of the



moon as a literary motif in Goethe's works, it would seem relevant first to consider the significance of the moon in more general terms.

In the broadest view, the moon has exercised an enormous influence on man's imagination, an influence which, though perhaps primarily poetic, has left its trace in myth and religion as well. If any symbols are "primordial" or "archetypal" in man's conscious or unconscious mind, the moon is surely one of them. Mythologists above all have been at pains to point out that it was the moon, mistress of the night, shining with a pale, mysterious, reflected light, changing and yet remaining constant, that excited the imagination of primitive man more than the sun<sup>76</sup>. Jung has indicated that the moon is related to the archetypal image of womanhood, or motherhood<sup>77</sup>, and Schopenhauer, perhaps most fully and deeply of all, has defined the effect of the moon on the imagination in his own way<sup>78</sup>.

However, it is not the place here to trace the moon's influence on the formation of myth, religion and folklore; some of the claims made in this respect are a little extravagant<sup>79</sup>. As a literary, more especially as a poetic motif, the frequency with which the moon has been used has made it at times into a lyrical cliché<sup>80</sup>.



Hans Bender, who deals shortly with the image in modern German poetry, points out in his introduction: "Auf der Suche nach dem einen poetischen Bild, das in der Lyrik früher und in der Lyrik heute einen unverrückbaren Platz einnimmt, das zugleich ... mit um so schärferer Deutlichkeit Talent, Rang und Individualität des Autors sichtbar macht, fanden wir das Bild Mond" <sup>81</sup>. Adalbert Güttler and Winifried Petri <sup>82</sup> believe that the reason for the moon's greater influence on the imagination is that man has been able to examine its irregular surface more closely than that of the sun. This idea is also at the basis of Marjorie Nicolson's study <sup>83</sup>, which deals with the effect on literature of the discoveries of Galileo and Newton. Here, however, as in another study based roughly on the same lines <sup>84</sup>, the emphasis is on the effect of scientific discovery on the didactic and philosophical rather than on the lyrical literature of the periods concerned.

As a motif in lyric poetry, the moon has attracted a reasonable, but still relatively minor amount of critical attention. Recently, an anthology (by no means exhaustive) of moon-lyrics has been compiled in Germany <sup>85</sup>, and the moon has been dealt with as a motif and symbol in certain literary periods, in folklore and, in a few cases, in the works of individual authors <sup>86</sup>. And



Livingstone Lowes, for example, devotes a whole chapter in his book on Coleridge<sup>87</sup> to "the journeying moon" and its importance as an image in the poet's work, particularly in The Ancient Mariner<sup>88</sup>.

More recently in Germany, two writers have dealt wittily and, at times, ironically with the subject. Peter Rühmkorf<sup>89</sup> traces "phases" of moon-poetry through German literature -- 18th century Empfindsamkeit, the Romantics, Late Romantics and Expressionists -- and sees these phases as "latente Krisenzeiten der Gesellschaft". He also points out that the moon has more than usual significance as a poetic motif; it is "eine Breitenmarotte und Generationskonstante", and though it may be objected that the moon is merely a poetic motif among other poetic motifs, it can also be claimed "das eben die Frage nach dem Mond als einem vorgezogenen Gegenstande dichterischer Beschreibung doch jene, ganz entscheidende, nach den Abend- und Schattenzwängen eines Individuums einschließt" <sup>90</sup>.

Rühmkorf shows, ironically enough, how the moon was more central than other images to the Romantics<sup>91</sup> and to the Expressionists<sup>92</sup>, but he is largely concerned with a pessimistic evaluation of the moon's place as a poetic image in contemporary literature. His more serious question is whether the moon is still today a valid poetic motif, "ob man sich mit dem Mond noch bereden



könne, als sei es das erste Mal ... ob die Metapher noch haftbar sei"; and he reaches the conclusion that not only the moon-image in particular, but the poetic metaphor as a whole, is threatened in the present age, "dort, wo [dem Dichten] mit dem Vertrauen in die Metapher, die wichtigste der poetischen Beziehungsfiguren, das Vertrauen in die Dichtkunst selbst abhandeln zu kommen droht ..... Seit dem 13. September 1959, 22.02 MEZ dürfte der Dichter kaum noch in der Lage sein, zwischen sich und dem Monde metaphorisch zu vermitteln" <sup>93</sup>.

The second writer, Kurt Ihlenfeld, who also sees the particular appeal of the moon as an image, takes a less pessimistic, if less serious point of view <sup>94</sup>. But Rühmkorf is not the first creative writer to raise the question of the validity of metaphor as a means of expression and communication in the 20th century; nor is he the first to cite the moon in this connexion. In an essay on Kafka's images <sup>95</sup>, Erich has pointed to passages in Kafka which deal with the same problem in more serious, if less explicit terms. In two of the conversations from Beschreibung eines Kampfes, Kafka describes the "sea-sickness on terra firma" which is experienced as a result of a recognition of the discrepancy between what things are and what they seem, or rather between the true definition of things and the arbitrary definitions by



means of which we pretend to perceive and recognise them:

Ich habe Erfahrung, und es ist nicht scherzend gemeint, wenn ich sage, daß es eine Seckrankheit auf festem Lande ist. Deren Wesen ist so, daß Ihr den wahrhaftigen Namen der Dinge vergessen habt und über sie jetzt in einer Eile zufällige Namen schüttet. Nur schnell, nur schnell! Aber kaum seid Ihr von ihnen weggelaufen, habt Ihr wieder ihre Namen vergessen. Die Pappel in den Feldern, die Ihr den 'Turm von Babel' genannt habt, denn Ihr wusstet nicht oder wolltet nicht wissen, daß es eine Pappel war, schaukelt wieder namenlos, und Ihr müsstet sie nennen, 'Noah, wie er betrunken war' ...

... Es hat niemals eine Zeit gegeben, in der ich durch mich selbst von meinem Leben überzeugt war. Ich erfasse nämlich die Dinge um mich nur in so hinfälligen Vorstellungen, daß ich immer glaube, die Dinge hätten einmal gelebt, jetzt aber seien sie versinkend ...

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And later Kafka turns to the moon to question its reality, and the validity of any metaphorical labels the observer might care to attach to it:

Als ich aus dem Haustor mit kleinen Schritte trat, wurde ich von dem Himmel mit Mond und Sternen und großer Wölbung und von dem Ringplatz mit Rathaus, Mariensäule und Kirche überfallen.

Ich ging ruhig aus dem Schatten ins Mondlicht, knöpfte den Überzieher auf und wärte mich; dann lies ich durch Erheben der Hände das Sausen der Nacht schweigen und fing zu überlegen an:



'Was ist es doch, das ihr tut, als wenn ihr wirklich wäret. Wollt ihr mich glauben machen, das ich unwirklich bin, komisch auf dem grünen Pflaster stehend? Aber doch ist es schon lange her, das du wirklich warst, du Himmel und du Ringplatz bist niemals wirklich gewesen.'

'Es ist ja wahr, noch immer seid ihr mir überlegen, aber doch nur dann, wenn ich euch in Ruhe lasse.'

'Gott sei Dank, Mond, du bist nicht mehr Mond, aber vielleicht ist es nachlässig von mir, das ich dich Mondbenannten noch immer Mond nenne. Warum bist du nicht mehr so übermütig, wenn ich dich nenne 'Vergessene Papierlaterne in merkwürdiger Farbe'. Und warum ziehst du dich fast zurück, wenn ich dich 'Mariensäule' nenne, und ich erkenne deine drohende Haltung nicht mehr, Mariensäule, wenn ich dich nenne 'Mond, der gelbes Licht wirft'.'

'Es scheint nun wirklich, das es euch nicht gut tut, wenn man über euch nachdenkt; ihr nehmt ab an Mut und Gesundheit.'

97

Erlich points out the bearing of these passages on the question of metaphorical expression: "In diesen frühen Äußerungen Kafkas geschieht nichts Geringeres als eine Zerstörung der Grundlagen und Voraussetzungen, unter denen bisher dichterische Bildersprache entfaltet hatte ... Es wird bezweifelt, ob das, was vorgestellt wird, auch eine tatsächliche Beziehung zur Wirklichkeit hat oder selbst Wirklichkeit ist ... Die Namen, mit denen [der Mensch] die Dinge bezeichnet, die Bilder, unter denen er sie anschaut, werden gleichsam zufällig über



die Dinge geschüttet, ohne ihre Wirklichkeit oder ihr Wesen zu treffen" 98.

He goes on to trace two factors (themselves closely interrelated) which contribute to the discrepancy between the reality of things and our attempts to express this reality. One factor is the inability on our part to grasp the reality of things in any direct or satisfactory way, our inability to see things as they are; a paralysis of our immediate sense-impressions caused by our over-awareness of a reality beyond that which is accessible to sense-impression ("Es scheint mir wirklich, das es euch nicht gut tut, wenn man über euch nachdenkt; ihr nehmt ab an Mut und Gesundheit"). The second factor is due to the same kind of question which Rühmkorf raises about the validity of metaphor, namely that the metaphorical expression of an object only removes us further from a statement of its true nature, because the relationship between the object and the metaphor is an arbitrary and wilful connexion made by the unreliable instinct, the "hinfälligen Vorstellungen" of the subject -- the observer, or the poet<sup>99</sup>. The estrangement between us and the objects of the world around us has made an organic and spontaneous relationship between ourselves and things, and consequently between our expression of these things and their true nature, impossible; hence



Kafka's impossible wish, "die Dinge so zu sehen, wie sie sich geben mögen, ehe sie sich mir zeigen. Sie sind da wohl schön und ruhig" 100.

Erlich goes on to draw the contrast between Kafka's attitude to metaphor and Goethe's; Kafka cannot trust traditional metaphorical images as a means of expression, "denn wenn den sinnlichen Qualitäten unserer Erscheinungswelt keine Wahrheit mehr zukommt, dann kann sich auch seelisch-geistiges Leben nicht mehr unbezweifelbar im Bereich unserer gegenständlichen Erfahrungswelt ausdrücken". For Goethe, on the other hand, "haben sinnliche Bilder unmittelbaren Anteil an der Wahrheit, wie die qualitativen Erscheinungen der Natur, ihre Farben, Formen, Töne, alle ihre sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Eigenschaften ewig gültige Urphänomene spiegeln und ausdrücken:

Den Sinnen hast du dann zu trauen,  
Kein Falsches lassen sie dich schauen (WA.I.1.82)

... In sinnlichen Bildern kann sich daher auch das empfindende Subjekt wahrhaftig ausdrücken. Denn es besteht nach der Überzeugung der ganzen klassischen und romantischen Epoche eine enge Wechselbeziehung zwischen der Sprache der Dinge und der Sprache der Seele" 101.



#### 4. The Study of Goethe's Moon-Imagery

With this in mind, we can turn to the moon as it appears in Goethe's works. In view of the frequency with which the moon is used by Goethe, as descriptive image, metaphor, symbol and allegory, and in view particularly of its manifest importance as an image in much of his work, it has attracted surprisingly little critical attention. Professor Willoughby has, as we have seen, included the moon among the relatively few central images in Goethe's work; yet it has been dealt with far less than such motifs as water (or more specifically the river), clouds, the Wanderer, the hut, and others. It is true that the moon has come within the scope of other studies, as an element in Goethe's landscape, in his mythology, as a symbol among other symbols, or even as a motif in his landscape drawings. Single poems -- An Luna, An den Mond, Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde, etc., have been dealt with extensively, the second in particular having attracted an inordinate amount of critical (and uncritical) attention.

Robert Petsch has devoted a short article<sup>102</sup> to Goethe's moon-poetry, but restricts his analysis to the three poems mentioned. He does, however, indicate the



importance of the image of the moon in Goethe's work and thought, and suggests that it is not merely a poetic motif, but one of the principal agents in the evocation of thought and contemplation, and a direct source of inspiration to the poet: "In ihrer zeitlichen Folge spiegelt Goethes Mondlyrik mit einseitiger Blickstellung und doch unendlicher Vertiefung den Gang seiner poetischen Erfassung der Welt; sie spiegelt zugleich die Entwicklung seiner dichterischen Gestaltungskraft, die sich erst allmählich zu jener symbolischen Höhe aufschwang und zuletzt gar über die reine Symbolik hinausdrang" <sup>103</sup>.

The only study devoted entirely to the moon in Goethe's works is a dissertation by Hans Schuls which appeared in 1912 <sup>104</sup>. This essay is a thorough, but by no means exhaustive investigation of the image of the moon based on a strictly chronological examination of the works in which the image appears. I am indebted to this work in many ways, but feel that such a descriptive rather than evaluative work has by no means exhausted the subject, particularly taking into account the developments in methodology and approach which have taken place over the last thirty years.

The basis of the present study will still be a largely chronological one; that is, we shall examine Goethe's imagery in the perspective of his development



-- but of his development as an artist, not as a man. The use of biographical references in a critical assessment of a poet's style has fallen, recently, into discredit; yet in spite of objections that might be raised, it seems that where a reference to a poet's personal life, or to other "extrinsic" sources or influences, forces itself into recognition, it would be foolish to ignore it merely on the grounds of a doctrinaire conviction that it is irrelevant. Where it seems pertinent, or necessary, we shall not hesitate to introduce biographical or historical references into the critical investigation of imagery. And although the general structure of the study will be based chronologically on the dates of the writing, or, what is perhaps more valid, on the dates of the conception of the works to be examined, there will equally be occasions when the strict adherence to such a pattern will prove undesirable or even impossible, and it will be necessary to deal with the image in terms of a certain genre rather than of a certain period.

Primarily, however, we are concerned with the examination of Goethe's moon-imagery in the perspective of his poetic development, and the starting-point for such a study must be an unbiased and intrinsic study of the images themselves, from which one will draw the conclusion that a distinct development in the poet's



use of imagery can be traced; from the early, consciously adopted, almost epigonenhaft anacreontic style of the Leipziger Liederbuch, through a more personal and original style, until the images of the poet reflect his whole thinking and creative outlook, and remain to the end of his artistic career powerful vehicles of expression, representing the uniqueness and originality of his art, and culminating in the moon-poetry written in the last years of his life.

And there is more than that, for the moon was for Goethe not merely a poetic image among other images drawn from nature; it is not even simply one of his "primordial" images, one of a limited range of images and symbols that accompanied the whole of his creative life. It is hardly extravagant to claim that the moon had more significance for Goethe than any other single image<sup>105</sup>. Wilhelm Erich has dealt with the symbols of Goethe's later works, and has selected certain central symbols (Schleier -- which he describes as the Urbild of Goethe's metaphors<sup>106</sup> -- Gold, Höhle, etc.), which are particularly important in revealing the older poet's thinking and creative work. These images, however, occur predominantly in the later works (especially, of course, in Faust II), and do not run through the whole of his works as leit-motifs in the same way as a nature-image such as the moon.



In a critical examination of the frequency, meaning and importance of the moon-image in Goethe's works it is hoped to make a contribution, however limited, to the study of Goethe's imagery as a whole, bearing in mind that the study of imagery itself remains the study of only one aspect of an author's work: "Imagery is one component structure of a poem ... it is a part of the syntactical, or stylistic, stratum. It must be studied, finally, not in isolation from the other strata but as an element in the totality, the integrity, of the literary work" 107.



## Chapter Two

1. Eighteenth Century Moon-Poetry
2. Leipzig and Frankfurt
3. Ossian and Werther
4. Empfindsamkeit
5. Mahomet and Urfaust
6. Pre-Weimar



## 1. Eighteenth Century Moon-Poetry

Without undertaking an exhaustive survey of the poetry of night and moonlight in the 18th century, it is still evident that Goethe's moon-lyrics represent the development, and in some cases the final stage, of trends and tendencies which had been active during the earlier part of that century<sup>1</sup>. Nothing could be further from the truth than to assume that Goethe's moon-poetry sprang up spontaneously, without antecedents or influences, however tempting this assumption may be when we consider the relative power and originality of his images. Even in the lyrics of the 17th century, as Charlotte Kahn points out, the moon had shone brightly, but "ohne den Dichter zu poetischen Empfindungen anzuregen"<sup>2</sup>.

It is hardly surprising that the moon and night, as poetic motifs or Stimmungsmittel, should be almost wholly absent from the works of Gottsched and the Aufklärer<sup>3</sup>. Other forces were at work, however, in the first half of the 18th century, which point forward to the moon-poetry of Klopstock and Goethe. The origins of these forces are complex and to a great extent obscure, but two major sources of influence can be traced quite clearly. Firstly, the researches and discoveries of



Newton and the scientists of the 18th century drew the attention of poets towards the planets, and particularly towards the moon -- much in the same way as Galileo had done in the previous century; and secondly, it is in terms of a reaction against the Age of Reason that the turning to night and moonlight in the poetry of the 18th century must be seen.

Even these two tendencies are themselves closely related; for Young, whose Night Thoughts is generally regarded as the forerunner and inspiration of the night-poetry of the 18th century, was himself influenced by Newton, and was still deeply enough rooted in rationalism to see the cosmic order as a revelation of divine order, just as Newton himself had:

Devotion! Daughter of Astronomy!    4  
An undevout Astronomer is mad!

Landsberg points out that Young, for all his Nachtschwärmerei, was still essentially a didactic poet<sup>5</sup>. And yet it is from Young that the reaction in lyric poetry against rationalism began; van Tieghem shows how the origin of the "night and graveyard" poetry in the 18th century was a reaction, in England against the school of "healthy common sense", in France against an outworn classicism, in Germany against anaereontic poetry



and in Italy against the Arcadian tendencies in poetry<sup>6</sup>. Peter Rühmkorf similarly diagnoses the "Mondsucht à la mode" of the century as the result of a need for introspection and intimacy of thought and feeling: "Die Wendung 'An den Mond' wurde bald ganz allgemein zu einer Chiffre für magische Kontaktaufnahme und intime Zwiesprache" <sup>7</sup>.

In the 17th century already, the moon had been used as a motif in lyric poetry, notably by Opitz and Spee, occasionally and largely externally as a Zeitbestimmung or a Stimmungsfaktor, either simply to set the time of day<sup>8</sup>, or to evoke a mood of gentle melancholy<sup>9</sup>. But it is not until well into the 18th century that we find the beginnings of the use of the moon as a lyrical topos which leads directly towards Klopstock's or Goethe's use of the image. Brockes and Günther begin to show a closer interest in nature, together with a more accurate perception of the landscape, and the former, in his description of light and shade<sup>10</sup>, can be classed among the foremost moon-poets of the early 18th century -- though he too was by no means free from the moralising tendency of contemporary verse. Haller, Gesner and Zachariä continue the tradition of moon-poetry, which is beginning to fall very generally into two types: on the one hand, the melancholy and nostalgic mood of longing





*Ach laßt uns an die Sonne denken, weil wir den sanften Mondschein sehen  
die ihn bestrahlt, und in der Sonne, der Sonnen Sonne, Gott, erhöht!*

Fig.1. Illustration to Brockes' Betrachtung des  
Mondscheins in einer angenehmen Frühlings-Nacht.



and escape<sup>11</sup>, and on the other a preoccupation with the pleasant and charming effect of moonlight, its seductive calm and its charm for the poet of Empfindsamkeit.

The publication of Klopstock's Oden in 1771 marks something of a breakthrough in the nature-poetry in general, as well as in the moon-poetry in particular, of the 18th century, especially in that he brings nature and mood into more organic relationship than any of the earlier poets<sup>12</sup>. Die frühen Gräber shows a subjective sympathy with nature, a filtering of the landscape through personal emotion and experience, which is quite novel in the literature of the time:

Willkommen, o silberner Mond,  
Schöner stiller Gefährt der Nacht!  
Du entfliehst? Eile nicht, bleib, Gedankenfreund!  
Sehet, er bleibt, das Gewölk wallte nur hin.

Klopstock's enthusiastic and imaginative reaction to nature distinguishes him from earlier writers and marks a step towards the immediacy of expression which is to characterise Goethe's nature-poetry<sup>13</sup>. And after Klopstock the importance and frequency of the moon as a poetic motif grows at the same time as the feeling for nature during the last part of the century; whereas Goethe's moon-lyrics, as we shall see, soon took on the individual characteristics of their author, other poets



remained more consistently under the direct influence of Klopstock. Matthiſſon, Claudius<sup>14</sup>, Cronegk, Wieland, together with Hölty and other members of the Göttinger Hainbund<sup>15</sup> carry this particular tradition of Empfindſamkeit well into the 1770's and later. Indeed, it is hardly unjustified here to claim a major rôle for the moon in the development of this late 18th century nature-poetry, which was itself preoccupied as much with the fascination of the night as with daytime nature<sup>16</sup>.

Moreover, the phenomenon of Ossian was no accident; such a vogue could never have been created without the previous tendencies with which the sentiment and expression of Macpherson's work coincided so remarkably. Van Tieghem shows how the Ossianic vogue was an organic part of the literary history of the 18th century, and further how the moon was also a leading motif in the Ossianic landscape<sup>17</sup>.



## 2. Leipzig and Frankfurt

It is against this background that we must approach Goethe's early moon-poetry; and though there is little critical value in tracing direct antecedents and sources alone, this is at least initially valuable in that it reminds us that Goethe's moon-lyrics were by no means the first of their kind, and that his first efforts in particular lean heavily on the tradition of anacreontic poetry which he met in Leipzig, and the poetry of Empfindsamkeit, which in turn had its origins in the earlier part of the 18th century, in the beginnings of an interest in nature as something more than a mere backcloth or ornamentation.

"L'histoire de l'expression des beautés ou des colères du ciel dans la littérature du 18ème siècle est surtout celle des efforts souvent bien timides des écrivains pour se libérer du fatras mythologique ou allégorique".<sup>18</sup>  
In Die schöne Nacht we find two of Goethe's most frequently recurring images, that of the moon and that of the hut, but as yet without any of the individual associations that he was later to give them:

Gern verlas ich diese Hütte,  
Meiner Schönen Aufenthalt,



Und durchstreich mit leisen Tritte  
 Diesen ausgestorbenen Wald.  
 Luna bricht die Nacht der Eichen,  
 Zephire melden ihren Lauf,  
 Und die Birken streuen mit Neigen  
 Ihr den süßten Weihrauch auf.

Schauer, der das Herze fühlen,  
 Der die Seele schmelzen macht,  
 Wandelt im Gebüsch im Kühlen.  
 Welche schöne, süße Nacht!  
 Freude! Wollust! Kaum zu fassen!  
 Und doch wollt ich, Himmel, dir  
 Tausend deiner Nächte lassen,  
 Gäß mein Mädchen Eine mir.

The Hütte was a part of the stock-in-trade of the anaacreontic landscape, as indeed was the moon, or rather "Luna". The moon-image here is not startlingly original; it is an element of the nocturnal landscape which helps to turn the thoughts of the poet to his beloved, and is moreover clothed in the conventional "fatras mythologique". What we have, in fact, is an allegory expressed in mythological terms: Luna, mistress of the night, is heralded by Zephyrs, and the birches are her courtiers. Certainly, the image of the birches spreading their pollen like incense is more natural and less conventional than the imagery of the previous lines<sup>19</sup>, but here, too, the image is dependent on the allegory -- that is, the scent given off by the birches is not simply expressed metaphorically as incense, but is seen as the incense offered to the goddess by her courtiers, the birches. The same type of limitation is also seen in the image of the hut; it



is not by any means the symbol which it later became for Goethe -- a place of rest, of Geborgenheit, the haven of the Wanderer -- but simply "seiner Schönen Aufenthalt".

The revised version of the first stanza of this poem, written for the 1789 edition of the Schriften, shows little change from the version of the Liederbuch; what changes have been made are distinct improvements towards a more direct, less consciously imaged style. "Ausgestorbenen Wald" becomes "öden finstern Wald", "die Nacht der Eichen" becomes "durch Busch und Eichen"; this tendency to pair nouns and adjectives quite simply, instead of using a more consciously metaphorical expression, is a feature of Goethe's more mature style<sup>20</sup>.

The revision of the second stanza is more drastic, though much of it does not concern us directly, since the moon-image is limited to the first. It might be pointed out, however, that the second version is less exuberant than the first, which with its outbursts "Freude! Wollust! Kaum zu fassen!" points forward to the note of jubilation to be found in Mallied. The words "Schauer" and "schmelzen" of the original version, later excluded, are common enough in the moon-lyrics of Klopstock and Cronegk; and although Goethe is to use "Schauer" often enough in connexion with night and moon-light in the pre-



Weimar lyrics, it is significant that the revised version of this poem substitutes for these words

O wie still ist hier zu fühlen,  
Was die Seele glücklich macht

-- lines which resemble the mood of the Weimar poem An den Mond more than that of the Liederbuch lyrics.

Common to both versions of Die schöne Nacht is the description of the "cool" night; this is an association which will assume more and more importance in Goethe's evocation of night and moonlight. It is the first hint of one of the dominant effects of the moon on the mood of the poet - its soothing, calming, relaxing influence. In the original version, the image of coolness is less directly related to the night --

Wandelt im Gebüsch im Kühlen.  
Welche schöne, süße Nacht!

-- than in the revised version, where the syntax and enlambement bring the association into closer relationship with night:

Wie ergötzt ich mich im Kühlen  
Dieser schönen Sommernacht!

The image of the moon, however, remains only a part of the scenic setting of the poem, and is expressed



in no very original manner; it is by no means as integral to the poem as it is in the next moon-lyric.

An Luna. Both poems do, however, have one characteristic in common; they are both erotic in tone, the first ending with a hyperbolic conceit, the second (in its original version) with a playful, even scurrilous eroticism.

Schwester von dem ersten Licht,  
Bild der Zärtlichkeit in Trauer!  
Nebel schwimmt mit Silberschauer  
Um dein reizendes Gesicht;  
Deines leisen Fusses Lauf  
Weckt aus tagverschlossnen Höhlen  
Traurig abgeschiedne Seelen,  
Mich und nächtge Vögel auf.

Porschend übersieht dein Blick  
Eine großgemeine Weite.  
Hebe mich an deine Seite!  
Gib der Schwärmeri dies Glück,  
Und in wollustvoller Ruh  
Säh der weitverschlagne Ritter  
Durch das gläserne Gegitter  
Seines Mädchens Nächten zu.

Dämmerung, wo die Wollust thront,  
Schwimmt um ihre runden Glieder.  
Trunken sinkt mein Blick hernieder --  
Was verhüllt man wohl dem Mond!  
Doch was das für Wünsche sind!  
Voll Begierde zu genießen,  
So da droben hängen müssen --  
Ei, da schieltest du dich blind!

(Revised version, 3rd stanza:)

Des Beschauens holdes Glück  
Mildert solcher Ferne Qualen  
Und ich sammle deine Strahlen,  
Und ich schärfe meinen Blick;



Hell und heller wird es schon  
 Um die unverhüllten Glieder,  
 Und nun zieht sie mich hernieder,  
 Wie dich einst Endymion.

The first two stanzas of An Luna are identical in both versions -- that is, the original of the Neue Lieder of 1769 and the second version for the Werke of 1815. The title and the third stanza, however, were changed, the latter radically. Various reasons have been offered for the change of title from An den Mond to An Luna. Boyd suggests<sup>21</sup> that the new title "is more in keeping with [the poem's] anacreontic mood and sentiments" -- a curious conclusion, since the revised version of the third stanza (which we must assume was changed at the same time as the title) has none of the "anacreontic mood and sentiments" of the original version of the same stanza; as we shall see, the mythology of the revised version has more in common with that of the Römische Elegien than with that of the Liederbuch. A more likely argument along these lines is surely that the introduction into the second version of Endymion, missing in the original, suggested the immediate and natural association of Luna. Other commentators suggest that the title was changed to avoid confusion with the Weimarer Mondlied; this may well be, but Goethe was evidently not disturbed by the fact that many of his poems have identical titles



or first lines<sup>22</sup>. Perhaps the most obvious reason for the change of title is that there is some incongruity in a poem entitled An den Mond which opens with the address "Schwester von dem ersten Licht".

This seems, however, to have been the only instance in which Goethe was disturbed by the masculine gender of the moon in German, in spite of the fact that his moon-images are almost always associated directly or indirectly with femininity<sup>23</sup>. The address to the moon as "Schwester von dem ersten Licht" is not new, but it is not clear whether Goethe had in mind here the mythological relationship of Apollo and Diana (as he later did in Iphigenie<sup>24</sup>) over and above the general literary notion of the sun and moon as brother and sister<sup>25</sup>.

Apart from the first line, however, the first stanza of this poem introduces for the first time an important element in Goethe's early poetry, namely the influence of Macpherson's Ossian, a translation of which appeared in the same year as the composition of the poem. Wolff<sup>26</sup> even gives a passage from Ossian as the inspiration for the whole poem: "Es spähte der Mond zur Nachtzeit in ihre Kammer und sah sie die zärtlichen Arme verzücken; denn Träume malten den mächtigen Crothar ihr vor". This cannot, however, be maintained without any doubt, since the theme of the moon shining into the chamber of



the beloved is common enough, particularly in the erotic verse of the 18th century<sup>27</sup>.

More important than the theme is the expression of the image<sup>28</sup>; the mood of melancholy, the moon in mourning, the "Silberschauer" -- at once a visual image and an expression of the mood evoked by the obscured face of the moon -- and finally the association of mist and moonlight:

Nebel schwimmt mit Silberschauer  
Um dein reizendes Gesicht.

The Ossianic moon was essentially a moon obscured by mist or cloud, a moon which evokes feelings of "Schauer" or "Schauder", melancholy or reflection -- above all, a motif which is associated with twilight and half-light, with "Dämmerung". The lines translated by Goethe from Ossian in 1771 are very similar in their associations:

Weit nach Lara dem Fluß,  
Wälzen düster-- Nebel so dunckl' und tief.  
Wie trüb-- Schild starck rollt im Nebel  
Gehüllet siebenmal, der Mond der Nacht 29.

And again, one of the Ossian translations included in Werther:

Minonas Augen waren voll Tränen,  
der Schwester des herrlichen Morars.  
Sie trat zurück vor Ullins Gesang.





Fig.2. Mond in Wolken.



Wie der Mond im Westen, der dem  
Sturmregen voraussieht und sein  
schönes Haupt in eine Wolke  
verbirgt ..." (WA.I.19.169 & WA.I.37.70).

The association of the moon with dim light, mist and cloud becomes for Goethe virtually a symbol of the nebulous and vague which at this period of his life was the ideal of beauty. This Dämmerungstheorie was the result of the influence of A.F. Oeser<sup>30</sup>, who taught art at the University in Leipzig, and from whom Goethe took lessons in sketching which were to influence his landscape drawings considerably. He acknowledges his debt to Oeser's ideas quite expressly in a letter of 9th November 1768<sup>31</sup>, and more clearly, his attitude towards the vague and the clair-obscur is expressed in a letter to Oeser's daughter Friederike:

Was ist Schönheit? Sie ist  
nicht Licht und nicht Nacht.  
Dämmerung; eine Geburt von Wahr-  
heit und Unwahrheit. Ein Mittel-  
ding. (13th Feb. 1769; WA.IV.1.199).

This period of preoccupation with the Dämmerungstheorie includes, moreover, the time spent in convalescence in Frankfurt, during which Goethe also became interested in alchemy and the occult sciences under the influence of Fräulein von Klettenberg. He writes again to Hetzler on 14th July 1770:



Ein für allemal bleibt [die  
Schönheit] unerklärlich; sie er-  
scheint uns wie ein Traum, es ist  
ein schwimmendes, glänzendes Schatten-  
bild, dessen Umriss keine Definition  
erhascht (WA.IV.1.238).

The Ossianic mood is continued in the second half of the first stanza of An Luna; the personification is continued in the line "Deines leisen Fusses Lauf". The words "leise" and "Lauf" both recall Die schöne Nacht, but the associations in this case are quite different; the feelings evoked by moonlight are not those of "schmelzen", but the macabre vision of night birds and departed souls. These lines have something in common with the Poésie de la Nuit et des Tombeaux of the 18th century, but more particularly the associations are those of Ossian and Klopstock's Die frühen Gräber. Looking forward again to Werther, we find a similar association in the letter of 10th September 1771:

Wir waren still, und [Lotte]  
fieng nach einer Weile an: Niemals  
gehe ich im Mondenlichte spazieren,  
niemals, das mir nicht das Gefühl  
von Tod, von Zukunft über mich  
käme ... (WA.I.19.82).

The mood here is still more the reflective mood of Klopstock than the more dismal and disturbed mood of Ossian; more vividly, the letter of 12th October 1771 has something similar to the associations of An Luna:



Ossian hat in meinem Herzen  
 den Homer verdrängt ... zu wandern  
 über die Heide, unsaust vom Sturm-  
 winde der im dampfenden Nebel die  
 Geister der Väter im dämmernden  
 Lichte des Monds hinführt. Zu  
 hören vom Gebirge her im Gebrülle  
 des Waldstroms halb verwehtes  
 Achzen der Geister aus ihren Höhlen,  
 und die Wehklagen des zu Tode sich  
 jammernden Mädchens ... (WA.I.19.151).

And some of the passages in Werther taken directly from Ossian show the same association of departed souls and moonlight<sup>32</sup>.

This first stanza of An Luna, then, gives us one of the first examples of Goethe's early Ossianisme, as well as an indication of the influence of Oeser's Dämmerungstheorie. We shall, however, meet the same association of spirits and moonlight in different contexts in Goethe's later work -- in some cases where the influence of Ossian cannot be traced<sup>33</sup>; it is an association which remained with the poet until the Italienische Reise, and even later. It is in An Luna, though, that we find the first indication in his works of the power of the moon to evoke sentiment, memories and mood -- an effect which was, however, not entirely absent in Die schöne Nacht. It is with An Luna that Goethe's moon-lyric really begins -- and more particularly in the first stanza, since the rest of the poem differs considerably



in mood and style from this stanza.

In the second stanza the lyrical expression gives way to a more dramatic movement, and it is here that a more playful lascivious note is introduced, contrasting sharply with the elegiac and melancholy mood of the first. Kutscher sees the first two lines of this stanza:

Forschend übersieht dein Blick  
Eine großgemessne Weite

as indicating a widening of Goethe's poetic horizon:

"Hier zum erstenmal haben wir plastisch eine landschaftliche Tiefe. Es ist, als wenn Goethe im Hause der Anakreontik ein Fenster öffnet, als wenn er in Ziergarten eine Hecke niederreißt"<sup>34</sup>. Apart from the fact that Kutscher misquotes the first line ("Forschend übersieht mein Blick"), these lines can hardly be taken to represent such a breakthrough in Goethe's feeling for nature, since nature is not even mentioned or evoked anywhere in the last two stanzas of the poem -- the image is simply that of the all-seeing eye of the moon, a motif common enough in literature, and particularly in folklore<sup>35</sup>. This idea is more fully expressed in the original version of the third stanza:

Was verhüllt man wohl dem Mond!



The anaoreontic conceit begins with the third line of the second stanza and, in the original version, continues to the end of the poem. The movement of the Liederbuch version is a development of the erotic mood of the last two lines of the second stanza and the first four lines of the third. "Dämmerung" is no longer, as in the first stanza, associated with beauty or melancholy, but with "Wollust"; mist no longer swims around the face of the "sovereign mistress of true melancholy", but around the "runden Glieder" of the sleeping beloved. The image of the mistress has displaced that of the moon, which is reintroduced in the last four lines, but in a manner which breaks the mood altogether in a sardonic parody:

Doch was das für Wünsche sind!  
 Voll Begierde zu genießen,  
 So da droben hängen müssen --  
 Ei, da schieltest du dich blind!

The revised version of the last stanza has no such Stimmungsbrechung: the erotic note is held to the end, and the expression is very much that of the later Goethe. Here there is no thought of "Dämmerung" -- the vision of the observer is on the contrary sharpened and concentrated by the rays of the moon; the limbs are not obscured by swimming mist:



Hell und heller wird es schon  
Um die unverhüllten Glieder.

Above all, the first two lines are expressed in terms quite foreign to the poet of the Leipzig and Frankfurt period -- where, before the Weimar years, or even before the Italienische Reise, does Goethe rejoice in "Des Beschauens holdes Glück"? The moon here is not the obscure moon of the opening lines of the poem, but the clear, steady moon of the Italian landscapes; indeed, this stanza is altogether in the spirit of the Römische Elegien rather than that of the early Goethe -- the "stiller Genus reiner Betrachtung" rather than the wild or sentimental emotions of Werther-Ossian, or the arabesques of the Liederbuch. Similarly, the introduction of Endymion in the final line is not a harking back to anaacreontic mythology in the style of Die schöne Nacht, but a more familiar and less allegorical use of classical allusion, common enough in the elegies:

In der heroischen Zeit, da Götter und Göttinnen liebten,  
Folgte Begierde dem Blick, folgte Genus dem Begier ...  
Hätte Luna geküßt, den schönen Schläfer zu küssen,  
O, so hätt ihn geschwind, neidend, Aurora geweckt.

(WA.I.1.236)



### 3. Ossian and Werther

The image of the moon has already been freed from the stylised allegory of Die schöne Nacht, and has come to represent for Goethe a motif associated with his ideal of beauty -- twilight, the obscure, the misty "Schauer" of moonlight. The moon was already personified in the first poem, but as allegory; in An Luna it becomes a vehicle for the poet's emotions, a sympathetic observer, confidant -- and, in the less serious part of the poem, collaborator.

The moon as companion is found again in Willkommen und Abschied; in Dichtung und Wahrheit, Goethe recalls the night ride to Sesenheim (with the poem itself, no doubt, serving as reference as much as his own memory), and describes how

der Mond beleuchtete mein leidenschaftliches Unternehmen. Die Nacht war windig und schauerlich, ich sprengte zu, um nicht bis morgen früh auf ihren Anblick warten zu müssen ... (WA.I.28.10).

By the time this poem was written, Herder's influence had made itself felt on Goethe's work; all conventional mythological elements had disappeared, and Goethe was moving towards a more independent, pantheistic view of



nature. Herder, in his Vom neuern Gebrauch der Mythologie, had pleaded for a new mythology, or at least a new attitude towards the old; poetry which sets out to depict or arouse emotion should "sich in das Labyrinth der Mythologie gar nicht, oder nur selten verlieren ... als poetische Heuristik wollen wir die Mythologie der Alten studieren, um selbst Erfinder zu werden ... ein großer Teil der Mythologie ist Allegorie! personifizierte Natur, oder eingekleidete Wahrheit!" 36.

The image of the moon in this poem is one of many elements in the nocturnal landscape, but it is one of the most significant and evocative elements. It plays a major part in the suggestion of the demonic aspect of nature, and particularly the demonic side of the nocturnal landscape, which we find here for the first time. Staiger rightly describes the mood of this poem as that of "innerer Glanz bei äußerer Düsternis" 37, the faint moonlight gives the landscape a menacing, hostile aspect, which looks forward to Erlkönig -- although the horrors of Willkommen und Abschied appear rather meretricious beside those of the later ballad. The word "schauerlich" is used here for the third time alongside the image of the moon, but in a more positively horrific sense than in the two previous poems; the mist reflects the moonlight to heighten the uncanny and menacing mood:



Der Mond von seinem Wolkenhügel  
 Sah schläfrig aus dem Duft hervor,  
 Die Winde schwangen leise Flügel,  
 Unsausten schauerlich mein Ohr ...

The moon has here none of the comforting or reassuring associations that it is later to have for Goethe, though not in itself menacing -- described as sleepy in the first version and mournful in the second -- it is used as it is used in Ossian, as a frequent (indeed, almost indispensable) motif in the description of calamity or menace, more often than not seen between clouds in a stormy nocturnal landscape<sup>38</sup>.

It is only in the first two stanzas of this poem, however, that there are traces of Ossian at all; the energetic movement of the last two stanzas leaves no room for the demonic moon-landscape, and the affirmative and dynamic energy of expression here points the way to Mailied, and even to some of the poems of the Geniezeit. It is, moreover, not surprising that the image of the moon should occur only this once in the poems of the Sesenheimer Lieder; in this cycle, the motif associated with melancholy and "Schauer" gives way to sunnier imagery. The extraverted mood of these poems, the character of Friederike herself, give no occasion for the Ossianic moon -- as Goethe indicates in Dichtung und Wahrheit:



... So stand ich in Gefahr, aus meiner Rolle zu fallen, weshalb der vorsichtiger Freund den schönsten Mondschein zum Vorwand nahm und auf einen Spaziergang antrug ... So zogen wir durch die weiten Fluren, mehr den Himmel über uns zum Gegenstande habend, als die Erde, die sich neben uns in die Breite verlor. Friederikens Reden jedoch hatten nichts Mondscheinhaftes; durch die Klarheit, womit sie sprach, machte sie die Nacht zum Tage ...  
(WA.I.27.254-5).

It is not until after the break with Friederike that the Ossianic mood reappears in Goethe's works, or that the moon becomes the "Gedankenfreund" of the poet again. Werther's reaction to the landscape is wholly sentimental; it is not the naïve joy in the Spring of the Sesenheimer Lieder, but a problematical relationship with nature, one which swings wildly from extremes to extremes. According to the mood and state of mind of the hero, nature can be a refuge, a positive place of rest and recuperation, or a terrible and destructive force. Goethe describes his own reaction to nature at the time of writing Werther:

Ich suchte mich innerlich von allem Fremden zu entbinden, das Äußere liebevoll zu betrachten, und alle Wesen, vom Menschlichen an, so tief hinab als sie nur faßlich sein möchten, jedes in seiner Art auf mich wirken zu lassen. Dadurch entstand eine wundersame Verwandtschaft mit den einzelnen Gegenständen der Natur, und



ein inniges Aufklingen, ein Mitstimmen ins Ganze, so daß ein jeder Wechsel, sei der Ortschaften und Gegenden, oder der Tags- und Jahreszeiten, oder was sonst sich ereignen könnte, mich aufs innigste berührte. Der malerische Blick gesellte sich zu dem dichterischen, die schöne ländliche, durch den freundlichen Fluß belebte Landschaft vermehrte meine Neigung zur Einsamkeit, und begünstigte meine stillen nach allen Seiten sich ausbreitenden Betrachtungen (WA.I.28.149-50).

It is hardly surprising that the moon should be a frequent motif in the landscape of Werther, in view of the associations it was coming to have for Goethe. The first mention of it is in a passage in which the mood is one of peace and Erholung -- the first indication of an association which is to become very closely related to the image of the moon in the lyrics of the Weimar period and in the Urfaust<sup>39</sup>:

... und wenn ich vor Müdigkeit und Durst manchmal unterwegs liegen bleibe, manchmal in der tiefen Nacht, wenn der hohe Vollmond über mir steht, im einsamen Walde, auf einen krummgewachsenen Baum mich setze, um meinen verwundeten Sohlen nur einige Linderung zu verschaffen, und dann in einer ermattenden Ruhe in dem Dämmerchein hinschlummere! (WA.I.19.80).

Here "Dämmerung" is still the dominant characteristic of the sentimental moon-landscape, which in spite of some elements which recall Ossian (the "krummgewachsene Baum"), is more that of Empfindsamkeit, of Klopstock's



odes. Again in the letter of 10th September, already quoted in connexion with the motifs of spirits and moonlight in An Luna, the mood is also that of peace, the pleasant and charming effect of moonlight and its gentle melancholy:

... Ich lief ihnen entgegen, mit einem Schauer faßte ich ihre Hand und küßte sie. Wir waren eben heraufgetreten, als der Mond hinter dem buschigen Hügel aufging ... Lotte ... machte uns aufmerksam auf die schöne Wirkung des Mondenlichtes, das am Ende der Buchenwände die ganze Terrasse vor uns erleuchtete: ein herrlicher Anblick, der um so viel frappanter war, weil uns rings eine tiefe Dämmerung einschloß. Wir waren still, und sie fing nach einer Weile an: Niemals gehe ich im Mondenlichte spazieren, niemals, daß mir nicht der Gedanke an meine Verstorbenen begegnete, daß nicht das Gefühl von Tod, von Zukunft über mich käme ... 40  
(WA.I.19.82) .

The chiaroscuro effects of the moonlight scene are described more vividly and effectively in the last lines of the same letter, which describe Werther's first parting from Lotte, and mark the end of the first book of the novel:

Sie stand auf, und ich ward erweckt und erschüttert, blieb sitzen und hielt ihre Hand. - Wir wollen fort, sagte sie, es wird Zeit. - Sie wollte ihre Hand zurückziehen, und ich hielt sie fester. - Wir werden uns wieder sehen, rief ich, wir werden uns finden, unter allen Gestalten



werden wir uns erkennen. Ich gehe, fuhr ich fort, ich gehe willig, und doch, wenn ich sagen sollte auf ewig, ich würde es nicht aushalten. Leb wohl, Lotte! Leb wohl, Albert! Wir sehn uns wieder. -Morgen, denke ich, versetzte sie scherzend. - Ich fühlte das Morgen! Ach, sie wußte nicht, als sie ihre Hand aus der meinen zog - Sie gingen die Allee hinaus, ich stand, sah ihnen nach im Mondscheine und warf mich an die Erde und weinte mich aus und sprang auf und lief auf die Terrasse hervor und sah noch dort unten im Schatten der hohen Lindenbäume ihr weißes Kleid nach der Gartentür schimmern; ich streckte meine Arme aus, und es verschwand. (WA.I.19.86).

The contrasting effects of the shadows cast in the moonlight by the lime-trees, and the shimmering white of Lotte's dress in the moonlight, which stands out for a moment against a dark background before it disappears from Werther's despairing gaze, give this natural scene a significant symbolism. The transparent, unreal quality of the white dress in the moonlight, which seems to dissolve as Werther stretches out his arms in a vain attempt to grasp it, reflects the very impossibility of Werther's passion, his attempt to clutch at a relationship which he knows to be impossible, and which because it is unattainable, like the white dress in the moonlight, only makes him grasp at it more desperately<sup>41</sup>. And the transparent quality of this whole scene in the letter of 10th September has something in common with the much



later moonlight scenes of the Wanderjahre -- the parting by Lake Maggiore, and the scene on ice in Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren<sup>42</sup>.

With the letter of 12th October 1772, however, a distinct development, or intensification, of Werther's reaction to the landscape can be noted<sup>43</sup>. The moon-landscapes in particular now have nothing of the calm melancholy of the earlier scenes, but read like passages taken literally from Ossian<sup>44</sup>; the moon is part of a demonic nature, tempestuous and in violent movement. We must note, however, that the moon in these passages, though an almost indispensable element in the Ossianic landscape, remains only a part of the landscape, of a subjective vision of nature which responds faithfully to the state of mind of the hero. It is not here a poetic symbol of melancholy or doom -- it is rather in the lyrics that the moon has more symbolic, or at least more strongly associative value. The moon in Werther is used more as a Stimmungsfaktor, much in the same way as it is used in Goethe's landscape drawings, in which it features frequently; more often than not shrouded in mist, a dim but central motif in the night landscape<sup>45</sup>.

The climax of the demonic moon-landscapes in Werther comes in the letter of 12th December 1772; in this passage, moreover, is the first association in Goethe's



works between the moon and water -- a motif which was to assume increasing and lasting significance in his later works:

Ein fürchterliches Schauspiel von  
Fels herunter die wühlenden Fluten in  
dem Mondlichte wirbeln zu sehen, über  
Äcker und Wiesen und Hecken und alles,  
und das weite Tal hinauf und hinab eine  
stürmende See im Sausen des Windes!  
Und wenn dann der Mond wieder hervor-  
trat und über der schwarzen Wolke ruhte  
und vor mir hinaus die Flut in fürcht-  
erlich herrlichem Widerscheine rollte  
und klang: da überfiel mich ein Schauer  
und wieder ein Sehnen! Ach mit offenen  
Armen stand ich gegen den Abgrund und  
atmete hinab! hinab! und verlor mich in  
der Wonne, meine Qualen, meine Leiden  
da hinab zu stürzen! Dahin zu brausen <sup>46</sup>  
wie die Wellen! (WA.I.19.151)

The moon reflected in the river, or the sea, cer-  
tainly here has none of the quiet and uncanny demonic  
effect it is to have in later lyrics like Der Fischer,  
or even An den Mond; the landscape here is wholly  
sentimental, tempestuous, Ossianic. And though Werther's  
longing to plunge into the moonlit river to rid himself  
of his torments, "dahin zu brausen wie die Wellen", does  
have something in common with Faust's longing to bathe  
away his cares in the moonlit dew<sup>47</sup>, this passage is  
very firmly in the context of the novel, and represents  
not so much Werther's longing to be rid of his troubles  
as his self-destructive erotic passion which chooses the



more violent Ossianic forms for its expression.

On the whole, the attributes and associations of the moon in Werther are very much those of Ossian and of the early lyrics: "trüb", "blas", "düster", "Dämmerung", "Schauer", "dampfende Nebel", etc., together with the association of spirits and mortality, or catastrophe<sup>48</sup>. In this respect the novel represents not so much a progression in Goethe's development, but rather a summing-up and conclusion of his early Ossianic poetry; and the moon in particular forms part of what van Tieghem describes as "un paysage sentimental, dans lequel on se plaît à rêver plutôt qu'en n'aime à le décrire, une toile de fond pour les amours inquiètes et mélancoliques, pour les tristesses vagues, pour les aspirations inassouplies, pour tous les sentiments si fréquents à la fin du 18ème siècle et au début du suivant, pour le Weltschmerz et pour le mal du siècle"<sup>49</sup>.



#### 4. Empfindsamkeit

But Goethe had not yet finished entirely with the tradition of Empfindsamkeit, and not altogether with Ossian. Beside the sentimental, but at the same time often vivid and exuberant reaction of Werther to the landscape, Stella marks a return to the pale melancholy of Klopstock -- and even that of his Epigonen, the poets of the Mainbund. Here the moon is the "melancholisches Stilmittel" par excellence, the companion and confidant of the sighing heroine. The associations are again those of twilight, shadow, graves, memories of the dead -- in short, the whole stock-in-trade of the Nacht- und Gräbdichter whom Goethe was later to satirise in the second part of Faust<sup>50</sup>, and above all in Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit. In Stella, the mood is more sentimental and lachrymose, and certainly less vividly evoked, than in Werther:

STELLA. O wenn ich manchmal von Gedanken  
in Gedanken sinke, freundliche Träume  
der Vergangenheit vor meiner Seele bringe,  
hoffnungsvolle Zukunft ahne, und so in  
des Mondes Dämmerung meinen Garten auf  
und ab walle, dann nich's auf einmal  
ergreift! ergreift, das ich allein bin,  
vergebens nach allen vier Winden meine  
Arme ausstrecke, den Zauber der Liebe  
vergebens mit einem Drang, einer Fülle



ausspreche, das ich meine, ich müste  
den Mond herunterziehen, -- und ich  
allein bin, keine Stimme mir aus dem  
Gebüsch antwortet, und die Sterne kalt  
und freundlich über meine Qual herab-  
blinken! Und dann, auf einmal das  
Grab meines Kindes zu meinen Füßen! ... 51.  
(WA.I.11.150)

This type of sentimentality is continued, more or  
less ironically and whimsically, in the later Singspiele  
and Divertimenti written for the Weimar court; in  
Claudine von Villa Bella, for example, it is impossible  
to take the moon-light dialogues seriously:

CLAUDINE.

In dem stillen Mondenscheine  
Wandl' ich einsam und alleine.  
Dieses Herz ist liebevoll,  
Wie es gern gestehen soll.

HUGANTINO.

In dem stillen Mondenscheine  
Singt ein Liebeslied! Wohl das meine?  
Ach so süß, so liebevoll,  
Wie die Cither klingen soll.

LUCINDE.

Hier im stillen Mondenscheine  
Ging ich freudig sonet alleine;  
Doch halb traurig und halb wild  
Folgt mir jetzt ein liebes Bild.



## RUGANTINO.

In dem stillen Mondenscheine  
 Geht das Liebchen nicht alleine,  
 Und ich bin so unruhvoll,  
 Was ich tun und lassen sell.  
 (WA.I.11.229-30)

The whole of Claudine von Villa Bella contains ironical allusions to the charm of moonlight<sup>52</sup>; more so than in Stella, the moon is here part of the theatrical scenery, as Brandes describes the moon of Tieck's poetry<sup>53</sup>, and which was among the tours de force of the Weimar stage-manager Mieding, as Goethe gratefully acknowledges in his tribute Auf Miedings Tod<sup>54</sup>. Again, Das Neueste von Plundersweilen shows a more deliberately satirical attitude towards the Mondsucht à la mode:

Jeder führt eine Jungfrau fein,  
 Die scheinen gleichen Sinns zu sein;  
 Denn sie tragen auf bunten Stangen  
 Paniere szierlich aufgehangen,  
 Die Zeichen ihrer Lust und Schmerz;  
 Einen vollen Mond, ein brennend Herz;  
 Wie denn nun fast eine jede Stadt  
 Ihren eignen Mondschein nötig hat ...  
 (WA.I.16.49).

More interesting is the explicit satire on such sensibility written in 1777. Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit. Merkulo, a forerunner of Büchner's Valerio, and in quite the same tradition of the cynical courtier, takes malicious delight in exploding the illusions of



the sighing ladies:

Freilich unterm freien Himmel kann  
man 's nicht immer so temperiert haben,  
wie man wünscht. Die Feuchtigkeit des  
Morgen- und Abendtaues halten die Leib-  
ärzte für höchst schädlich, den Duft des  
Mooses und der Quellen bei heißen Sommer-  
tagen für nicht minder gefährlich! ...  
Und in den schönsten wärmsten Mondnächten  
sind die Mücken just am unerträglichsten ...  
(WA.I.17.18-19).

Similarly, Goethe parodies the same kind of moon-  
light lyric as that of Claudine von Villa Bella:

MANA. Kein Liedecken an den Mond?  
MERKULO. O, deren haben wir verschiedene.  
Ich kann gleich mit einem aufwarten.  
SORA. Tun Sie 's ja!  
MERKULO (singt). Du gedrechselte Laterne,  
Überleuchtest alle Sterne,  
Und an deiner kühlen Schnuppe  
Trägst du der Sonne mildesten  
Glanz.  
SORA. O pfui! Das ist gar nichts Empfindsames!  
(WA.I.17.25-26).

-- and finally, the stage-direction in the third act  
puts paid to the moon of the sentimental poets:

Die feierliche Musik geht fort,  
die Wasserfälle fangen an zu rauschen,  
die Vögel zu singen, der Mond zu scheinen ...  
(WA.I.17.30).

Even this satire, however, did not mean that Goethe  
had finished with the Singspiel, or with the moon of  
Empfindsamkeit; alongside the sarcasm of Der Triumph



der Empfindsamkeit, other slight works show Goethe as the purveyor of moonlight à la mode to the Weimar court. Lila contains less satirical references to the "Kühle der Nacht"; the moon "erhellte die Fichten", and the heroine "wandelt des Nachts in ihren Phantasien herum ... mit losen Haar im Mondschein einen Kreis abgehend" (WA.I.12.48-49). Later, Jery und Bätely, Was wir bringen and Die ungleichen Hausgenossen continue in the same vein -- in the latter there are even references to well-known figures at the court:

O herrliche Sonne,  
 Du gleichst der Gräfin  
 Die blendend gefällt,  
 Und Luna, du milder Stern,  
 Du gleichst der holden Baronesse!

O Luna, ich vergesse  
 Der Sonne gar gerne,  
 O Luna, ich vergesse  
 In deinen sanften Strahlen,  
 In deinem süßen Lichte,  
 Vor deinem Angesichte,  
 Der Sonne, der Welt...

(WA.I.12.244).

There is some gentle satire here, too, on the court poet "Immersuß", whose irritating characteristic is "daß er zu jeder Zeit empfindet":

Er fühlet rechts und links  
 Die Schönheit der Natur.  
 Kein Baum darf unbewundert grünen oder blühen,



Kein Stern am Horizont herauf  
 Die Sonne sich nicht zeigen,  
 Und der Mond beschäftigt ihn nun gar  
 Vom ersten Viertel bis zum letzten...  
 (WA.I.12.231-2).

The Maskenzüge are not without their allegorical moons either; in the Aufzug der vier Zeitalter, the Silver Age appears in a variant as "Blau mit Silber, mannigfaltigere Tracht, zum Hauptschmuck einen silbernen Mond" (WA.I.16.440). And in the masquerade written for 30th January 1784, to celebrate the birthday of the Duchess Luise, Luna delivers her greetings and promises:

Was im dichten Haine  
 Oft bei meinem Scheine  
 Deine Hoffnung war,  
 Komm auf lichten Wegen  
 Lebend dir entgegen,  
 Still erfüllt sich dar.

Meiner Ankunft Schauern  
 Sollst du nie mit Trauern  
 Still entgegengehn;  
 Im Genus der Freuden  
 Will zu allen Zeiten  
 Ich dich wandeln sehn.

(WA.I.16.203).

-- There can be no doubt that many of these Divertimenti were written largely for, and found favour with, the Duchess Luise, whose literary pretensions were very much more modest than those of her mother-in-law the Duchess Anna Amalie, the founder of the Weimar Musenhof; and Luise's tutor, Fräulein Ravanel, had been active in the



Darmstadt circle of Empfindsamen<sup>55</sup>.

This direction in Goethe's use of the moon as a motif is clearly a blind alley; it is only surprising that he should be writing such material at the same time as the Weimar lyrics and the first drafts of his great plays -- for the Singspiele and Maskenspiele stretch well into the early Weimar years and even further<sup>56</sup>. That Goethe should write something like Der Groß-Cophta shortly after completing Tasso, for example, is something which the argument of the theatre director in the Vorspiel auf dem Theater does not altogether explain. These Divertimenti, which seem to us hardly worth considering, represent a considerable part of Goethe's creative output; a number of the early ones -- Erwin und Elmire, Lila, Claudine von Villa Bella, and Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit, were revised, some quite extensively, between 1786 and 1789 for the eight-volume edition of the Werke. And Der Groß-Cophta, published in 1792, represents a last example, not without irony, of Goethe's catering for Mondsucht à la mode. The moon, says the Marquise, is the symbol of women -- "weil er sie erinnert, daß sie kein eigen Licht haben, sondern daß sie allen Glanz von Manne erhalten"; and the ladies are sent home with this salutary advice:



Wenn ihr nach Hause fahrt, werdet ihr linker Hand das erste Viertel am klaren Himmel erblicken; dann sprecht untereinander: seht, wie zierlich er da steht! welches gemässigte Licht! welche schöne Fülle! welche Sittsamkeit! das wahre Bild einer liebenswürdigen heranwachsenden Jungfrau. Erblickt ihr künftig den Vollmond, so ermahnt euch untereinander, und sprecht: wie schön glänzt das Bild einer glücklichen Hausfrau! sie wendet ihr Gesicht gerade ihren Manne zu; sie fängt die Strahlen seines Lichts auf, die sanft und lieblich von ihr wiederglänzen. Das bedenkt recht, und führt untereinander dieses Bild aus, so gut ihr nur könnt; setzt eure Betrachtungen so weit fort als ihr vermöget ... und der Himmel behüte euch vor dem abnehmenden Lichte, vor dem betrübten Witwenstande! (WA.I.17.128-9).

##### 5. Mahomet and Urfaust

"Der Faust entstand mit meinem Werther" <sup>57</sup>. The years in Frankfurt 1772-1775 saw not only the completion of Werther, but also the beginnings -- and largely no more than the beginnings -- of Faust, Mahomet, Prometheus and other works associated with the so-called Geniezeit. It is, from our point of view, proof of the curious diversity of Goethe's development that a work such as the (admittedly only fragmentary) Mahomet could take shape at the same time as Werther. The pantheistic



hyan to cosmic nature in the fragment Feld, Gestirnter Himmel is far removed from the Oesianic Schwärmerei of the novel, which is not separated from the fragment by more than a year. The explanation for this must be sought in the influence of Spinoza on Goethe in these Frankfurt years, encouraged and developed by his friendship with F.H. Jacobi.

The origins of Goethe's pantheism certainly lie further back than this -- in the study of Giordano Bruno, for example, in Strasbourg; and clearly the overwrought devotional attitude to nature of Werther's letters (especially those of 10th May and 18th August 1771) is very much inspired by pantheistic notions<sup>58</sup>. But his deeper interest in Spinoza seems to have shown him what Werther had lacked; in Dichtung und Wahrheit he acknowledges his debt to both Jacobi and Spinoza. The former, he writes,

suchte, ... mein dunkles Bestreben zu leiten und aufzuklären. Eine solche reine Geistesverwandtschaft war mir neu und erregte ein leidenschaftliches Verlangen fernerer Mittheilung. Nachts, als wir uns schon getrennt und in die Schlafzimmer zurückgezogen hatten, suchte ich ihn nochmals auf. Der Mondschein zitterte über dem breiten Rheine, und wir, am Fenster stehend, schwelgten in der Fülle des Hin- und Wiedergebens, das in jener Zeit der Entfaltung so reichlich aufquillt ... Die alles ausgleichende Ruhe Spinozas kontrastirte



mit meinem alles aufregenden Streben,  
 seine mathematische Methode war das  
 Widerspiel meiner poetischen Sinnes-  
 und Darstellungsweise ... Ich fand  
 hier eine Beruhigung meiner Leiden-  
 schaften, es schien sich mir eine  
 große und freie Aussicht über die  
 sinnliche und sittliche Welt aufzutun ...  
 (WA.I.28.288-9).

This is the polarity of Werther and Mahomet;  
 nature for Werther may be "heilig", but it can equally  
 become a destructive force, a wild unleashed power which  
 is reflected in the turbulent Ossianic imagery of the  
 novel. Mahomet represents the obverse; nature is  
 "heilig" because it is the immediate revelation of its  
 creator -- 'Εν καὶ πᾶσι <sup>59</sup>. And the moon-imagery of  
 the poem is representative of this attitude; the prophet  
 addresses the stars, the moon and the sun in his hymn  
 to creation:

Sei gesegnet, o Mond! Führer du des Gestirns,  
 Sei mein Herr du, mein Gott! Du beleuchtest den Weg.  
 Laß! laß nicht in der Finsternis  
 Mich irren mit irrenden Volk.

This is a moon quite removed from the obscured,  
 dim moon of Ossian-Werther; far from evoking turbulent  
 moods and memories, far from accompanying catastrophes  
 and floods, the moon is here addressed as a master, a  
 god, it is appealed to for light and guidance; it is  
 the "Führer des Gestirns", the light-giving planet, not



the pale light which transforms the landscape into a demonic "Ungeheuer".

Inevitably, however, just as the prophet had turned from the stars to the moon, the moon gives way to the sun, and the sun in turn to the divine creator, in the final stanza of praise:

Du alliebender, du  
Der die Sonne, den Mond und die Sterne  
Sahst, Erde und Himmel und mich.

The moon is by no means the central image in this fragment; it is clearly subordinated to the sun, which in turn, like all creation, is subordinated to the creator. The stars and planets have their existence only in and through the divine principle. The poem is a static development of lyrical moods, a series of addresses which restart with each stanza, each one surpassing the other in its expression of praise and devotion. The poem has none of the loose but at the same time organic lyrical unity of Goethe's other poems of this period; and as such, Mahomet is again something of a blind alley in his poetic development. As Staiger points out, at this stage in his life, Goethe was hardly likely to let himself be bound by any dogmatic creed such as that expressed in the absolute and fully committed pantheism of Mahomet; and this might also explain why the lyrical



form and metre of the ode are unique in his work<sup>60</sup>.

And yet this fragment does not stand altogether alone in Goethe's works; in Mahomet's praise of the sun, moon and stars as manifestations of the divine, the infinite and the enduring, we see not only a companion-piece to the passage from the Prometheus fragment:

Pandora, dein Busen schlug  
Der kommenden Sonne,  
Dem wandernden Mond entgegen ...  
(WA.I.39.210).

but also the beginnings of one of the aspects of the moon-imagery of the Weimar lyrics, where Goethe's intention is precisely "das Irdische gegen das Ewige einzutauschen", to see the planets, and in particular the moon, as symbols of permanence which are removed from, and in polar opposition to, the transitory nature of human existence.

This is, moreover, more clearly formulated in the third part of the dramatic fragment -- included among the lyrics as Mahomet's Gesang -- where we find the image of the river used, as it is later in An den Mond, to represent the transitory element, the human as opposed to the divine, the finite as opposed to the infinite, in short, the element Goethe was to choose as a symbol of his own existence -- the arbitrary, wilful course of



genius. This poem, as opposed to the hymn of Mahomet, is one continuous movement; it is dynamic and enthusiastic, has all the affirmative energy of the Sesenheimer Lieder, but expresses at the same time Goethe's thought and outlook towards Gott und Welt.

Closely related to Mahomets Gesang is the Gesang der Geister über den Wassern, which was to have been included in the Mahomet drama under its original title Gesang der lieblichen Geister in der Wüste, and which was placed immediately after Mahomets Gesang by Goethe in the 1789 edition of the Schriften. Here the river is again the bearer of time, the transitory life of man; but the divine is present here, too. Its symbols are precisely those of Mahomet's hymn -- the stars, the symbols of the infinite, the permanent and the suprahuman, are reflected in the stiller waters of the river of the plain and the lake:

Und in dem glatten See  
Weiden ihr Antlitz 61  
Alle Gestirne .

As yet, however, we have only the beginnings of the association of the stars and the moon with the image of the river which is to find its fullest expression in An den Mond; between Mahomet and the Weimar lyrics is still a wide gap. It would appear that with Mahomet Goethe



had finally abandoned the Ossianic moon for the clear "Führer des Gestirns"; but the very first moon-image of the Urfaust introduces a lyrical interlude which leads us back to the earlier motifs of dim, ghostly light and melancholy. Faust, in his study, has resolved to turn to magic in a desperate attempt to grasp the meaning and value of existence, when he addresses a sentimental, elegiac plea to the moon for release:

O sähest du voller Mondenschein  
 Zum letzten mal auf meine Pein  
 Den ich so manche Mitternacht  
 An diesem Pult herangewacht.  
 Dann über Bücher und Papier  
 Trübseelger Freund erschienst du mir.  
 Ach könnt ich doch auf Berges Höhn  
 In deinem lieben Lichte gehn  
 Um Bergeshöhl mit Geistern schweben  
 Auf Wiesen in deinem Dämmer weben  
 Von all dem Wissensqualm entladen 62.  
 In deinem Thau gesund mich baden

With the failure of his attempt to comprehend the universe by means of the intellect, this passage represents Faust's appeal to nature for liberation from his "Wissensqualm"; a longing for Lethe, for rebirth and regeneration in direct communion with nature. This is the first of three appeals to nature by Faust for comfort and liberation; later, in the Wald und Höhle scene of the Fragment, he is similarly to seek rest and escape, though in a different landscape from this one. And later still, in



the opening scene of Faust II, he is eventually to find the oblivion from which he can awake refreshed. Moreover, the image of the moon -- certainly in very different forms and functions -- is found in each of these passages.

Geneviève Bianquis, discussing Faust as a work based on the element of light, as the progression of the man Faust from darkness to the "Klarheit" promised by the Lord in the prologue, and achieved in the final scene of the play, sees this passage as the first of three visitations to Faust in the form of light: "... ainsi l'exilé de la lumière est visité dans sa prison par des lumières diverses: clair de lune, lueur de la lampe familière, flamme de l'apparition" <sup>63</sup>. None of these manifestations of light has the effect for which Faust is seeking; they represent early, fumbling attempts, during which he can delude himself that he is nearer the truth -- delusions again expressed in images of light:

Mir wird so licht ...  
 Mir ist auf einmal lieblich helle ...  
 Da wird in meinem Busen helle ...

-- but from which he returns, defeated, to the hopeless reality of his situation.

This is particularly true of the passage we are considering; Faust's fantasy-journey through the Ossianic



landscape is no more than a momentary release, from which he returns to the "dumpfes Mauerloch" in a state of desperation, in the realisation that he can have no direct contact with nature; he can only experience it in an indirect, refracted form, "trüb durch gemalte Scheiben".

In spite of the illusory and hopeless nature of this appeal in the context of the play, these lines, in themselves virtually an independent lyrical poem, contain motifs which are reflected in the lyric poetry written before and after the Urfaust. True, it is still the dim, mournful Ossianic moon, the "trübseelige Freund"; and in the first two lines are expressed all the unfulfilled aspirations and longings of Werther -- though here more compactly and vividly expressed in the lyrical idiom than in all the fustian and vehemence of the novel's prose. The second half of the passage once again involves the spirits which are by now becoming closely associated with the image of the moon. More than anything else, these lines recall the first stanza of An Luna in their association of spirits and moonlight:

Um Bergeshöhl mit Geistern schweben  
Auf Wiesen in deinem Dämmer weben...

Here, however, we must draw a distinction between



the positive, albeit unfulfilled, aspirations of Faust and the melancholy mood of An Luna or the pessimism of Werther; the mood of the landscape is, as before, a ghostly "Dämmerung", but these lines have an energy and promise which is new in the Ossianic moon-imagery. The change of mood in the middle of the passage is expressed as much as anything by the change in rhythm; whereas the first four lines have a heavy, accentuated beat on alternate syllables, the irregular rhythm of the following lines (especially the two lines of ten syllables) give a lyrical impulse of motion and freedom, ending on a slight rallentando in the last two lines, which, together with the final unstressed syllable, express the mood of release, however temporary and illusory.

This is the first indication we have of the healing, soothing power associated with the image of the moon, other than the letter of 30th August 1771 in Werther. The moon, or the spirits associated with it, or the twilight of the moonlit night, no longer lead the poet to elegiac or melancholy thoughts of the beloved, nor do they evoke the ghosts of the past; on the contrary, the moon promises peace, freedom, oblivion and ultimate recovery:

Von all den Wissensqualm entladen  
In deinem Thau gesund mich baden.



It is surely no accident that the lines written much later into the final version of the first part of Faust should again associate the promise of Lethe with the image of the moon; Faust, before reaching for the poison from which he similarly promises himself a release from "Wissensqualm" and from his dusty study, sees this release in terms of moon-imagery -- though, significantly, it is no longer the obscure moon of Ossian, but the clear, bright moon of the later works: no longer "Mondesdämern" but "Mondesglanz". The change in the image is reflected in the change in metre; doggerel gives way to the measured rhythm of the lines:

Doch warum heftet sich mein Blick auf jene Stelle?  
Ist jenes Fläschchen dort den Augen ein Magnet?  
Warum wird mir auf einmal lieblich helle  
Als wenn in nächt'gen Wald uns Mondesglanz umweht?

The association of death -- or at least of oblivion -- with clear moonlight seems strange; why should a phial of poison evoke in Faust's mind the vision of a moonlit night, or an image of light at all? The association can only be explained in terms of Goethe's later moon-imagery. In death, Faust again hopes for a rebirth, a Lethe which will still the titanic aspirations for which he finds no immediate satisfaction, a peace which will give him strength to aspire to "neue Sphären reiner



Tätigkeit" ; now, this peace, this relaxation of care, is for Goethe, by the time this passage of Faust was written, very closely associated with the image of the moon -- the soothing and healing influence already contained in the first Urfaust address to the moon, and which reaches its fullest expression in the Weimar lyrics. Indeed, the lines addressed to the phial:

Ich sehe dich: es wird der Schmerz gelindert,  
Ich fasse dich: das Streben wird gemindert...

recall nothing so much as the mood and language of Jägers Abendlied and An den Mond<sup>64</sup>. It is also perhaps relevant here to point out the polarity of the sun and moon images in this passage; Faust here turns his back on the "holden Erden-sonne" -- just as he will do, though more positively and symbolically, in the opening scene of the second part. In his death-wish, it is the image of the moon that is dominant, the image of escape, oblivion and (it is hoped) regeneration<sup>65</sup>.

At the same time, while the notion of regeneration and rejuvenation presupposes some form of rest or oblivion, the moon cannot here be seen simply as a symbol of oblivion or escape alone; it is rather the moon that represents the positive relaxing and regenerating force of "Lethé" -- just as it does in the opening scene of the second part<sup>66</sup>. And there is also perhaps in this



passage from the suicide scene some element of the moon as a guide in darkness which was its function in the Mahomet fragment:

Sei gesegnet, o Mond! Führer du des Gestirns,  
Sei mein Herr du, mein Gott! Du beleuchtest den Weg.  
Las! las nicht in der Finsternis  
Mich irren mit irrendem Volk.

-- and this in turn might explain the positive use of "Mondenglanz" as a polarity to the dark background in the line

... Als wenn im nächt'gen Wald uns Mondenglanz umweht.

The idea of regeneration is also present in the Urfaust passage, though the association is a different one; Faust promises himself a renewal of his forces in the dew of the moon. This is one of the most striking and evocative of Goethe's moon-images, although precisely why the association of moon with dew, and the image of bathing oneself back to health in the moonlit dew, should be so effective remains obscure. The association of the moon and dew is one which is rooted so deeply in folklore and superstition that we might justifiably speak here of an archetypal association. We have already mentioned the association between the moon and water -- one which is again found in primitive belief<sup>67</sup>.



and one which Goethe was to exploit fully in later lyrics<sup>68</sup>. That between the moon and dew seems to have similar imaginative effect, and more specifically -- which is interesting particularly in this context -- that between the healing or soothing properties of dew and moonlight. The early association of night and moonlight with coolness has already been touched upon<sup>69</sup>; it is not a very big step from this association to that of water, dew, and the healing properties ascribed to moonlight -- one which, as Julius Schwabe points out, is widely accepted: "es gibt kaum eine zweite Vorstellung von so universaler Geltung wie die der wässerig-kühlen Natur des Mondes" <sup>70</sup>.

It is hardly exaggerated to point out a parallel here with the archetypal baptismal significance of water and its traditional associations with coolness, purity and innocence. The baptismal element seems to be particularly associated in Goethe's mind with this phenomenon of dew and moonlight, and this is seen both in the opening monologue of Urfaust and in the scene of Faust's rejuvenation in the first scene of Faust II, where Ariel's command to the elves is

Dann badet ihn im Tau aus Lethes Flut;



and in the second vigil which represents the fulfilment of Ariel's instruction, the moon and water are the dominant images of the stanza<sup>71</sup>. This specific association of moon and dew is also used elsewhere by Goethe -- though nowhere to such effect as in these two scenes: in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht:

Da, wo Luna doppelt leuchtet,  
Uns mit heiligen Tau befeuchtet  
(vv. 7513-14).

-- and in Die Ungleichon Hausgenossen, where the association is again that of regeneration and refreshment:

Es säuselt der Abend,  
Es sinket die Sonne.  
Ergänzend und lebend.  
In Tau und in Wonne,  
In Nebel und Flor,  
Schwankt Luna hervor (WA.I.12.244).

Finally, in relation to the Urfaust passage, the following verses written to Frau von Stein again express the image of moonlight together with the notion of bathing and regeneration:

Und ich geh meinen alten Gang  
Meine liebe Wiese lang.  
Tauche mich in die Sonne früh,  
Bad ab im Monde des Tages Müh... (WA.I.4.210).

The only other moon-image in the Urfaust is of a different character altogether; opening the book of



Nostradamus and seeing the sign of the Erdegeist. Faust experiences the vision of the Erdegeist itself, which is introduced by cataclysmic phenomena, expressed by Faust himself in a series of ejaculatory and incoherent images of light and darkness:

Es wölkt sich über mir.  
Der Mond verbirgt sein Licht!  
Die Lampe schwindet!  
Es dampft! Es zucken rothe Strahlen 72.  
Mir um das Haupt!

The fearful vision is accompanied first by darkness: natural and familiar light disappears, the moon, Faust's "trübseeliger Freund", grows dark, the lamp is extinguished, and an unnatural light, the red flames of the Erdegeist, takes their place. The image of the moon hiding her face is by no means an original one -- it may have been taken by Goethe from a number of sources. Harold Jantz refers it back to a passage from Cicero, in accordance with his thesis that Faust is more a product of the Renaissance than of Germanic tradition<sup>73</sup>. More likely as a source, however, is the passage from one of the Puppenspiele von Dr. Faust, which Goethe certainly knew at least as well as his Cicero:

Ha! Mitternacht, die Stunde der  
Gemeinschaft mit der Hölle ist da.  
Grauensvolle Wolken nahen sich heran!  
... der Mond verbirgt sich in den Wolken,  
als ob er nicht sehen wollte, was unter 74  
ihm vorgeht ...



## 6. Pre-Weimar

The pre-Weimar moon-imagery closes with two poems, both written in 1775, in which it is possible to see the development of Goethe's lyric poetry as a whole in the last Frankfurt years, but more so the direction his poetry is to take in the early Weimar period. The explosive and exuberant mood of Mailied, Willkommen und Abschied, the Ossianic Schwärmerei of Werther, the all-embracing pantheism of Mahomet, the longing for a full and almost mystical communion with nature of Urfaust give way to a more harmonious vision of nature, to the expression of fullness and ripeness.

The moon-imagery of An Belinden in itself does not tell us much about the development of Goethe's lyric; in fact, the second and third stanzas seem rather to represent a falling back into the style of the anaereontic verses, or even of Empfindsamkeit:

Heimlich in mein Zimmerchen verschlossen,  
Lag im Mondenschein,  
Ganz von seinem Schauerlicht umflossen,  
Und ich dämmert ein;

Träumte da von vollen goldenen Stunden  
Ungemischter Lust,  
Ahndungsvoll hatt ich dein Bild empfunden  
Tief in meiner Brust.



The diminutive "Zimmerchen", the "Schauerlicht" of the moon, the association of "Dämmerung", the whole image of the youth dreaming in the moonlight -- all these motifs recall the earlier lyrics; the liquid, shimmering quality of the moonlight is that of An Luna. Yet though the image of the moon is one which seems to break no new ground, other aspects of the poem have a note that is new. The very rhythm of the alternate long lines is not that of the anaoreontic lyrics, nor that of the later Strasbourg or Frankfurt poems; the first line:

Warum ziehst du mich unwiderstehlich ...

resembles more the rhythm of the later lyric

Warum gabst du uns die tiefen Blicke ...

-- and further, the "vollen goldnen Stunden" hint at a new expression in images of ripeness and fullness. And the last two lines of An Belinden are closer in mood and expression to the lyrics addressed to Frau von Stein than to those addressed to Friederike or Lili Schönnemann, and are certainly far removed from the deliberate irony and artificiality of Lilla Park:

Wo du, Engel, bist, ist Lieb und Güte,  
Wo du bist, Natur.



This "autumnal" mood is brought to its fullest expression in Herbstgefühl, written in the same year, presumably before Goethe's departure for Weimar; it is, indeed, tempting to place it directly before his departure at the end of October, after the break with Lili Schönemann. This not only because the poem has as its subject-matter this season of the year, but more because it expresses like no other the sense of completion, the end of a period or cycle, a rounding-off and taking account, a melancholy and resigned, but clearly and unconditionally accepted coming to terms with the past, which holds at the same time a promise and affirmation of the future in the recognition of "der ewig belebenden Liebe".

Nature is at the period of maturity, of fruit; the whole imagery of the first six lines is that of fullness and ripeness which is brought to its final stage by the "Scheideblick" of the sun and the "Zauberhauch" of the moon. Here is the finest expression of the cooling influence of the moon:

Euch brütet der Mutter Sonne  
 Scheideblick; euch umsäuselt  
 Des holden Himmels  
 Fruchtende Fülle;  
 Euch kühlt des Mondes  
 Freundlicher Zauberhauch ...



Both sun and moon play their part in the maturing of the fruit<sup>75</sup>; both warmth and coolness are needed to express the essence of ripeness. From the image of coolness develops, naturally enough, the image of dew, which in turn is associated with the tears of the poet, and so links the nature-imagery with the subject:

Und euch betauen, ach!  
 Aus diesen Augen  
 Der ewig belebenden Liebe  
 Vollsichwellende Tränen.

We cannot claim, however attractive such an assertion may be, that this poem contains in itself the sum of all the associations that have clustered around the image of the moon in the imagery and lyrics of Goethe's pre-Weimar works. These are too many-sided and varied, and are too much conditioned by the immediate content, mood, influences and circumstances of the individual works themselves. However, in the image of Herbstgefühl, not only are some of the more frequent associations dealt with already in this chapter evoked once more -- the magical quality of moonlight, its cooling power, its soothing influence on nature and man, the very epithet "freundlich" -- but we are also prepared for the less exuberant, more contemplative and stable moon-imagery of the Weimar lyrics. Emil Staiger sums up the Janus-like quality of this poem:



"Noch einmal, und üppiger, saftiger, dichter als je, bricht das Innere aus dem Schoß der Natur -- doch im Licht des Herbstes, unter dem 'Scheideblick' der Sonne, die bald entschwindet; Trauer der Vollendung bebt in den schwankenden, kaum faßbaren Rhythmen. Das Jahr der Seele, das mit dem Mailied begonnen hat, sinkt dem Winter zu ... Der Glanz erlischt; aber in der Nacht, im Mondlicht über der Ilm, wird der Wanderer wieder erwachen, um sein Geschick in stillerem Herzen zu bedenken ... "76.



### Chapter Three

1. The Moon in the Early Weimar Lyrics
2. Letters and Landscape Drawings
3. An den Mond - First Version
4. An den Mond - Second Version
5. Swiss Journey
6. Demonic Moon-Landscapes
7. Pre-Italy



# 1: The Moon in the Early Weimar Lyrics

The first poem with which we have to deal in this section is problematical only if we enter the lists in an attempt to show to whom it was written -- or, more accurately, to whom it is addressed in the poet's mind. This would not in itself be a meaningful exercise in many cases other than the present one; but the clear thematic connexions<sup>1</sup> between Jägers Abendlied and the following Weimar moon-lyrics have led some critics to claim that it was addressed not to Lili Schönnemann but to Charlotte von Stein:

Im Felde schleich ich still und wild,  
Gespannt mein Feuerrohr.  
Da schwebt so licht dein liebes Bild,  
Dein süßes Bild mir vor.

Du wandelst jetzt wohl still und mild  
Durch Feld und liebes Tal,  
Und ach, mein schnell verrauschend Bild,  
Stellt sich dirs nicht einmal?

Des Menschen, der die Welt durchstreift  
Voll Unmut und Verdruss,  
Nach Osten und nach Westen schweift,  
Weil er dich lassen muß.

Mir ist es, denk ich nur an dich,  
Als in den Mond zu sehn;  
Ein stiller Friede kommt auf mich,  
Weiß nicht, wie mir geschehn.



Buisongé, naturally enough in view of his thesis, contradicts Gräf and Eduard von der Hellen, who both confidently claim that the poem is addressed to Lili<sup>2</sup>. Buisongé's "proof" is very dubious -- namely, the fact that Goethe only started hunting in Thüringen, and also that it is very doubtful that his thoughts, when seeking the peace he asks for in the poem, would be directed backwards to the stormy and painful relationship in Frankfurt not long ago. The poem is not mentioned in Dichtung und Wahrheit as being among those addressed to Lili, whereas Neue Liebe, neues Leben, Ihr verblühet, süße Rosen and Lilis Park are. On the other hand, neither is it found among the letters addressed to Charlotte. Buisongé's argument is speculative in the extreme: Charlotte would have seen it anyway in the Teutsche Merkur early in 1776, and besides, "Goethe dürfte sich nach seinen vorigen und noch rezenten Liebeserfahrungen nicht getraut haben, der Frau von Stein auf direktem Wege das Gedicht vorzulegen"<sup>3</sup>.

Hans Schulz insists that it is addressed to Charlotte; among his reasons are that the image of a woman walking "durch Feld und liebes Tal" is more readily applicable to Charlotte than to Lili, the Salondame of a large city<sup>4</sup>.

Other critics are equivocal; Petersen points out



that the lines

Mir ist es, denk ich nur an dich,  
Als in den Mond zu sehn

seem more appropriate to Charlotte than to Lili, and supports this rather tenuously with reference to a letter from Zimmermann to Lavater<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, he does quite rightly insist that Goethe, far from having put Lili out of his mind after his arrival in Weimar, had on 24th December 1775 written the following lines:

Halde Lili, warst so lang  
All mein Lust und all mein Sang,  
Bist, ach, nun all mein Schmerz, und doch 6.  
All mein Sang bist du noch

Kutscher makes no definite claims for the object of the Abendlied, and offers no satisfactory conclusion, unless we are meant to deduce that it wavered between the two women<sup>7</sup>. This appears to be in Petersen's mind, too, when he irrelevantly introduces in this connexion the metaphor used by Goethe in Dichtung und Wahrheit to describe the transition from one affection to another:

Es ist eine sehr angenehme Empfindung,  
Wenn sich eine neue Leidenschaft in uns  
zu regen anfängt, ehe die Alte noch ganz  
verklungen ist. So sieht man bei unter-  
gehender Sonne gern auf der entgegen-  
gesetzten Seite den Mond aufgehn und  
erfreut sich an dem Doppelglanze der 8.  
beiden Himmelslichter



Staiger more relevantly refers to a poem by M.A. von Thümmel as a possible antecedent for the Abendlied, and concludes that it constitutes a farewell to Lili, while at the same time its theme and motifs point forward to the poems dedicated to Charlotte: "Es ist noch an Lili gewidmet, eröffnet aber zugleich die Reihe der Mond- und Nachtgedichte, die durch die Nähe der neuen reiferen Freundin bestimmt sind" <sup>9</sup>.

No clear or satisfactory answer can be found if we insist on asking who was in the poet's mind, nor is this a very meaningful question either to ask or to answer<sup>10</sup>. What is more interesting and more valid is to examine how far the poem reflects the transition in Goethe's attitudes and feelings which we found expressed in the previous poem Herbstgefühl, and further how far the image of the moon accompanies and reflects this change of mood.

The choice of the hunter as the central figure in this poem was quite possibly inspired by Goethe's initial enthusiasm for Karl-August's passion; from our point of view, however, it is more interesting to see the Jäger here as a variant on the familiar image of the Wanderer. This is indicated particularly in the third stanza; there is something of the restless Urfaust here:



Ha bin ich nicht der Flüchtling, Unbehauste, 11  
Der Unmensch ohne Zweck und Ruh ...

The poem is a farewell to this part of the past, and although the poet sees himself as a prey to restless and uneasy moods, the image of the beloved has assumed the peace for which he is striving:

Du wandelst jetzt wohl still und mild  
Durch Feld und liebes Tal ...

Moreover, her image has become associated with that of the moon; the association of peace and freedom from care so powerfully expressed in the Urfaust monologue is now coming to be the central one for Goethe. The recollection of a distant or absent lover in the light of the moon is already hinted at in the first stanza; in this implicit association of the hunters' moon with recollection and memory there is the indication of a theme which was to be developed again and again in Goethe's works -- the idea of lovers' thoughts turning to one another by the light of the moon<sup>12</sup>.

In the last stanza of Jägers Abendlied the two images of the moon and the beloved are identified; and it is this stanza precisely that sets the tone for the following moon-lyrics of peace sought and, perhaps precariously, obtained. This coda to the poem -- which, as



Staiger points out, "noch zwischen Trotz und Ergebung schwankt" <sup>13</sup> -- sets the moon as a motif which, though so removed from the here and now as to be unattainable, still bestows its calm and peaceful light on an uneasy mind; or, as Schopenhauer expresses it, "er ... stimmt uns erhaben, weil er, ohne alle Beziehung auf uns, dem irdischen Treiben ewig fremd, dahinzieht, und alles sieht, aber an nichts Anteil nimmt. Bei seinem Anblick schwindet daher der Wille, mit seiner steten Not, aus dem Bewusstsein" <sup>14</sup>. The rhythm of these last lines reflect this; the retarding of the opening three words, the stressed long vowels of "als in den Mond zu sehn", and of the word "Friede" in the third line, restate in a more positive way the similar mood of the second stanza, whereas stanzas one and three are by contrast dramatic and tense. The very last line of the poem leaves the conclusion open, and implicitly poses a question which will be answered in the following lyrics, which describe and evoke more clearly the exact nature of this new-found peace.

Although the image of the moon does not now recur in Goethe's lyric poetry until the first version of An den Mond, it would seem relevant here to deal briefly with a poem which was written shortly after Jägers Abendlied, and which develops the theme of its last stanza



more explicitly and more effectively. The motif of peace is central to both poems entitled Wanderers Nachtlid, but it is in the first that we see the clearest link between Jägers Abendlied and An den Mond. There is here the image of the wanderer, "des Treibens müde", the restless seeking for freedom from "Leid und Schmerzen", the questioning of the value of "all der Schmerz und Lust" -- and, from a formal point of view, Wanderers Nachtlid I has the pairing of words characteristic of the revised version of An den Mond. There is the longing for "Erquickung" -- a notion that is itself frequently associated with the effect of the moon by Goethe<sup>15</sup> -- and finally the appeal for "süße Friede". The peace of God, of Heaven -- whatever the origin or source of this peace may be<sup>16</sup> -- is becoming identified for the poet with the figure of Frau von Stein, and both she and this notion of peace, release and quiet introspection are in turn becoming closely associated with the image of the moon. As yet, the image of the moon has appeared only once in the lyric poetry of the early Weimar period; but as we see from these two lyrics, the theme of peace is from the very beginning a dominant one in this poetry, and it is a theme that is to be evoked above all in the moon-lyrics and other references addressed to Frau von Stein.



Precisely why Charlotte should at this time come to have this association for Goethe is, and will remain, inexplicable. It can only be suggested that her whole character -- and even her appearance -- had an effect on Goethe which, when he expressed it in his lyrics, as he often did, called to mind no other image with such immediacy as that of the moon. The associations of this image which we traced in the previous chapter, those of coolness, peace, oblivion, "Erquickung", "Labung", quiet recollection -- and others which were, or were to become, closely related with it, are among those feelings which Charlotte so evidently evoked in Goethe's mind at this stage. In an interesting and, for such a scrupulous scholar, relatively unscholarly passage, Emil Staiger even suggests that Charlotte may be associated with the "Königin der Nacht" in Goethe's second part of the Zauberflöte<sup>17</sup>, and goes on to suggest why the attributes of Charlotte and those of the moon may have become so closely fused in Goethe's lyrical thinking:

"... Das fügt sich zu dem Bilde der Frau, der die unvergeßlichsten Mondstimmungen der Goetheschen Lyrik gewidmet sind, die für das Auge des Liebenden und wohl auch nach eigenem schmerzlich-stolzem Wissen über der Erde in stiller Einsamkeit zu wandeln scheint, unberührbar, fern, kühl, die wie der Tagmond den Zauber verliert,



wo sie außerhalb von Goethes Liebe sichtbar wird, und immer wieder, wenn wir sinnend bei ihrem Glanz verweilen möchten, den Blicken entschwindet im Gewölk undeutlicher Überlieferung ... Unserer Erwartung entsprechen die weißen Kleider, die sie liebte und vorzugsweise trug. Ihr tiefes, in jeder Umgebung unstillbares und deshalb für sie und andere mühsames und beschämendes Bedürfnis nach vollkommener Reinheit drückt sich darin aus ...<sup>18</sup>.

The light of the moon, its spiritual, introverted, even ghostly character, its stable but changing aspect, its removal from the "Treiben" of the world, its "milder Glanz", its power to loose and bind, to "lösen" and "bannen", its whole power of attraction, are the natural parallels that Goethe found to his attachment to Charlotte; as Staiger again says, "Nur in vollkommener Stille sind die 'tiefen Blicke' in das Reine und Unveränderliche vergönnt. Im Abendfrieden beschwichtigte Landschaft, wie sie Wanderers Nachtlied feiert, das Licht des Mondes über der Ilm, das 'wie des Freundes Auge mild' ein rätselvolles Geschick beglänzt, ... dies alles gehört in die gleiche immer tief ersehnte und selten erreichte Zone der neuen höheren Wahrheit, die Frau von Stein dem Gereiften verheißt ..."<sup>19</sup>.



## 2. Letters and Landscape Drawings

Goethe's preoccupation with the moon during the early Weimar years is reflected in the letters and diaries of this time as well as in the use of the image in his lyric poetry. Although it may be dangerous to infer very much from the lack of evidence in his early documents, as far as they have survived, it is hardly coincidence that from July and August 1776 the references to the moon in letters (particularly in those to Charlotte von Stein) and diaries increase both in frequency and significance; before then, on the other hand, there is a notable absence of such references in Goethe's correspondence, although descriptions of evening and nocturnal scenes had not been lacking. In fact, the only allusions to the moon, with the exception of those references in letters to Kestner cited above<sup>20</sup>, and of two references which make up part of a conventional phrase<sup>21</sup>, are contained in a passing remark on a moonless night<sup>22</sup>, and earlier in an analogy Goethe uses to express his relationship with Herder<sup>23</sup>.

The majority of references to the moon in the correspondence of 1776 onwards are found in letters to Frau von Stein; some of them are passing references



which have no particular significance except to show how sensitive Goethe was at this time to the effects of moonlight on the landscape:

... In der Höhle von Weissenburg  
 ... der Tag ist grau aber schön! wie schön  
 die Nacht war und der Mond auf der Saale  
 im Thal läßt sich nicht sagen (to Charlotte,  
 10th July, 1777; WA.IV.3.164).  
 Nachts in meinem Garten, in einem warmen  
 Stübgen da mir draußen über Schnee und  
 hellen Mondenschein, Waldhörner übers  
 Thal herüberblasen (to Lavater, 19th  
 February, 1777; WA.IV.3.136).  
 ... Nachts halb 12. Eben komm ich wieder  
 aus der Stadt herauf. Noch eine gute Nacht  
 -- Im Mondschein den herrlichen Stieg  
 auf die Burg! (to Charlotte, 14th September,  
 1777; WA.IV.3.177). ... Eine herrliche  
 Mondennacht! ich bin über die Wiese nach  
 meinem Garten oben heraus gegangen, habe  
 mich in Nacht Dämmer gelegt ... (to Lavater,  
 25th August, 1776; WA.IV.3.99).

Some of the earlier letters have more interesting references to moonlight and its associations, of which two are worth noting, namely, the association of moonlight with water, and the theme of lovers remembering each other by moonlight -- associations which recur through the whole of Goethe's work. These two associations cover all other references to the moon in the letters written between Goethe's arrival in Weimar and the beginning of the second journey to Switzerland in 1779, with the exception of a simile used in a letter to Charlotte in December 1776<sup>24</sup>. The idea of greeting or trysting



an absent friend by moonlight is found explicitly and implicitly in a number of the letters to Charlotte:

Beym Monde denken Sie mein. G.  
 (23rd August, 1776; WA.IV.3.98). ...  
 Liebste diesen Abend denk ich mir Sie in  
 Ihrer tiefe um Ihren Graben im Mondschein  
 beym Wachfeuer dann es ist kühl ... Wenn  
 ich Ihnen nur diesen Blick der mich nur  
 kostet aufzustehn vom Stuhl hinüberseegen  
 könnte. In dem grausen linden Dämmer des  
 Monds die tiefen Gründe, Wiesen, Büsche,  
 Wälder und Waldblößen ... und wie die  
 nackten Felsspitzen im Monde röthen und  
 die lieblichen Auen und Thäler ferner  
 hinunter, und das weite Thüringen hinter-  
 wärts im dämmer sich dem Himmel mischt ...  
 (13th September, 1777; WA.IV.3.175-6).  
 ... Ich sagte: ich hab einen Wunsch auf  
 den Vollmond! -- Nun Liebste tret ich vor  
 die Thüre hinaus da liegt der Brocken im  
 hohen herrlichen Mondschein über den Fichten  
 vor mir ... (10th December, 1777; WA.IV.3.  
 200). Mit dem aufgehenden Mond hab ich  
 mein ganz Revier umgangen ... Einige Anblicke  
 waren ganz unendlich schön, ich wünschte sie  
 Ihnen vors Fenster ... Noch einen guten Morgen  
 und Ade! Gestern Nacht wars herrlich un's  
 dampfende Wasser im Mondschein. Heute noch  
 herrlicher nur unendlich kalt. Denken Sie  
 mein ... (2nd-3rd January, 1779; WA.IV.4.1).

This theme continues in the letters to Charlotte written between the Schweizer Reise in 1779 and the Italienische Reise, either expressing the wish to be at her side in the moonlight, or greeting the moon and recalling her in absence:

Was habe ich von dem heutigen Tage zu hoffen. Ich will im Garten essen, wenn du mit einigen wolltest zu mir kommen, Thee



trincken und Abends bleiben! Was ihr wollt; so würdest du mich glücklich machen der Mond würde recht schön aufgehen und mir an deiner Seite leuchten... (21st August, 1782; WA.IV.6.42). ... Die erste schriftliche gute Nacht, nach dem ersten leider ohne dich verlebten Tage. Um 9 und 10 begrüßt ich den Mond, mit dem Herzog auf dem Platze herumgehend. (23rd August, 1782; WA.IV.6.43). ... Ich bin einigemal bis nach Mitternacht in den neuen Anlagen herumgegangen der Mond machte alles gar herrlich. Dieses Jahr werd ich nicht viel mehr mit dir spazieren können (25th September, 1785; WA.IV.7.100). ... Das Wetter hat sich gebessert, noch sind Wolcken über den Bergen, der lunge Mond verbirgt sich, ich kann es ihm zulassen, denn eh er voll wird will ich ihn schon wieder an deiner Seite belauschen ... (7th November, 1785; WA.IV.7.116).

The second association, of the moon with water, which is the most frequent and consistent of all the associations of the moon in Goethe's works, and which is of particular significance in the lyric poetry of the early Weimar years, is found in one form or another in various references in the letters written between 1776 and 1778; it will recur with slightly different emphasis and significance in the letters of the second Schweizer Reise<sup>25</sup>. Also among the letters are found fragmentary lyrics which reflect the same association which is used in the major lyrics of this period:

... Nachts halb elf. der Mond-  
schein war so göttlich ich lief noch ins



Wasser. Auf der Wiese und Mond ...  
 (to Charlotte, 2nd July, 1776; WA.IV.  
 3.84).

In a letter to Auguste von Stolberg Goethe includes the lines:

Alles geben Götter die unendlichen  
 Ihren Lieblingen ganz  
 Alle Freuden die unendlichen  
 Alle Schmerzen die unendlichen ganz.

-- So sang ich neulich als ich tief in  
 einer herrlichen Mondnacht aus dem Flusse  
 stieg der vor meinem Garten durch die  
 Wiesen fließt; und das bewahrheitet sich  
 täglich an mir ... (17th July, 1777; WA.  
 IV.3.165-6);

and in August 1777 Goethe sent these lines to Charlotte  
 which recall the Urfaust idea of bathing away care in  
 the moonlight:

Und ich geh meinen alten Gang  
 Meine liebe Wiese lang.  
 Tauche mich in die Sonne früh  
 Bad ab im Monde des Tages Müh ...  
 (WA.IV.3.167).

There is also, among the numerous diary entries  
 between 1776 and the beginning of the Schweizer Reise  
 which refer to the moon and moonlight<sup>26</sup>, one in particular  
 which again brings together water and moonlight, and  
 reflects Goethe's enthusiasm for bathing at night during  
 these years: "Abends anfangen schwimmen in Floßgraben  
 schöne Mondnächte" (7th August, 1778; WA.III.1.69).



Finally, in this connexion there might be mentioned the well-known lines to Frau von Stein written after and referring to the death of Christel von Laßberg, evoking the uncanny attractive power of water -- lines which critics have referred either exclusively to An den Mond, or to Der Fischer, or to both:

Gute Nacht Engel, schonen Sie sich  
und gehn nicht herunter. Diese ein-  
ladende Trauer hat was gefährlich an-  
ziehendes wie das Wasser selbst, und der  
Abglanz der Sterne des Himmels der aus  
beyden leuchtet lockt uns ... (19th  
January, 1778; WA.IV.3.208).

The moon, then, both as a natural phenomenon and as a lyrical motif, is mentioned and used with considerable frequency in the lyrics, letters and diaries of Goethe's first years in Weimar. But before returning to the lyrics, it is more than interesting to look at Goethe's landscape drawings; the years 1775-77 were particularly productive ones in this respect -- only during the Italienische Reise, it seems, did Goethe apply himself more to his sketching<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, the frequency with which the moon recurs in these early Weimar drawings reflects the same frequency in other fields of expression. Apart from one indistinct sketch<sup>28</sup>, probably from 1767 or 1768, the first drawing in which the moon appears as a central motif in the landscape is the



first of a series of eleven Mondscheine drawn between 1776 and 1777<sup>29</sup>, out of a total number of drawings of about 95 for this period. There is a further drawing, not included by Fennel, in Wahl's selection of Goethe's early landscape drawings<sup>30</sup>.

The largely statistical evidence given above is little more than Materialsammlung; apart from the theme of absent lovers trysting by moonlight and the sometimes only passing, but, in view of the lyric poetry, significant association of water with moonlight, the allusion to its attractive or mysterious effects, this accumulation of evidence can and does show only one thing: that the moon features very largely and frequently in Goethe's works in the early Weimar years, and more particularly in the years 1775-1780. We have gathered almost purely statistical evidence from the letters; there is little else to be inferred from the diaries, and the main purpose here is to assess the importance and meaning of the image of the moon in Goethe's creative literary writing. It is still relevant, however, to indicate the very frequency of the references to the moon found outside the poems themselves in order to show how the moon was at this time one of Goethe's favourite nocturnal subjects, and how its appearance as a central lyrical motif was neither arbitrary nor accidental -- even though this may



not explain Goethe's predilection for the image. But if the diaries and letters do not throw much light on the motif as used in the lyric poetry, it might be profitable to examine the drawings in conjunction with the lyrics.

Critics have already noted some connexion between the moon-landscape drawings of this period and the lyrics, though few go so far as to relate certain drawings to certain poems, due to the absence of any definite confirmation with regard to dates. Münz points out that "was Goethe sonst sehr oft zum Zeichnen trieb, sind Landschaften, die ein Stück Natur im Mondlicht zeigen. Wie Goethe in seinen Gedichten das milde Licht des Mondes fast öfter feiert als das der Sonne, so findet man auch mehr Darstellungen dieser Art unter seinen damaligen Zeichnungen" <sup>31</sup>. Wahl similarly points out: "Wie ist Goethe brüderlicher eingedrungen in die Kräfte der Jahreszeiten, der Tag- und Nachtzeiten, der ihm nachbarlich gesellten oder von ihm aufgesuchten Fluß-, Baum-, Wiesen-, Berg- und Talnatur als damals, als es ihm gelang, die mondliche Einsamkeit seines Gartenhauses, ... den bläulichen Eiszauber des Schwansees im Mond, die einsame Erhabenheit des winterlichen Brockens ... die im Mondlicht schwebende weiße Nebelwolke über dem Fluß ... und manches andere mit künstlerischen Mitteln zu gestalten ..." <sup>32</sup>.





Fig.3. Mond zwischen Bäumen.

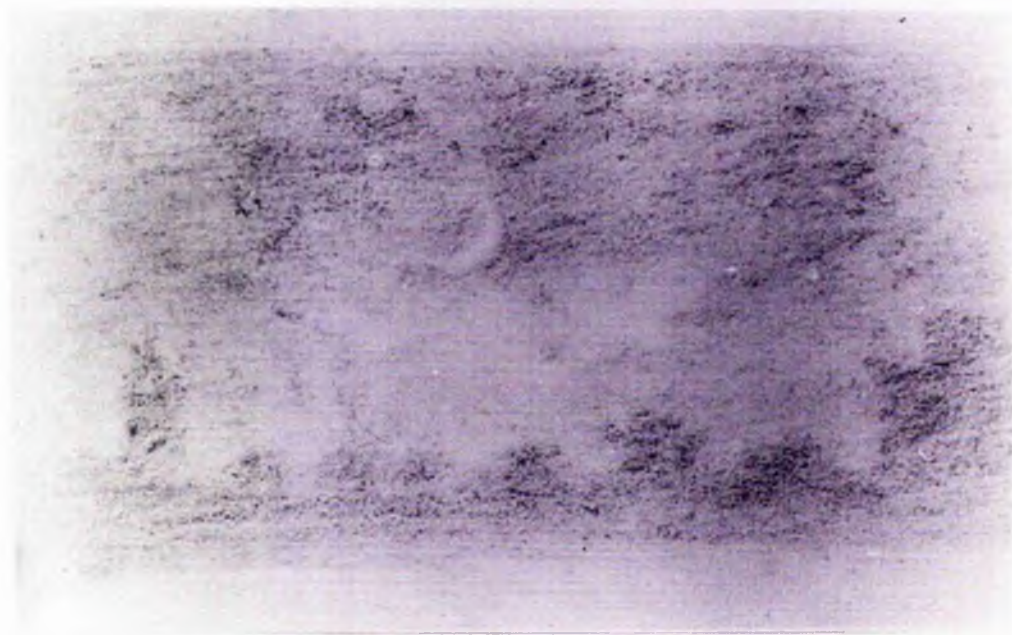


Fig.4. Mondscheinlandschaft mit Mühle.



When it comes to any definite correlation of drawings and lyrics, however, Wahl remains very general in his assertions, and only relates two of the moon-landscapes to the poems -- both to An den Mond. The first is Mondschmel über nachtdunklen Bäumen: "Das Ganze ein Nichts und doch ein unendlich Intimes im Zusammenhang mit dem Lied an den Mond, der über des Dichters Gefilden lindernd seinen Blick breitete" <sup>33</sup>. This drawing, however, is so vague -- like many of these early moon-landscapes <sup>34</sup> -- that any parallels drawn between them and the lyrics must remain very speculative; indeed, this particular sketch and one or two others <sup>35</sup> could be referred more satisfactorily to an earlier poem such as An Luna rather than to the Weimarer Mondlied, if only because of the indefinite and veiled forms of moon, mist and cloud which recall the "Bild der Zärtlichkeit in Trauer" rather than the "stille Nebelglanz" of the later poem.

Wahl refers further to a "hauchzarte kleine Bleistiftzeichnung des aufgehenden Vollmonds, die sich den Versen An den Mond geschwisterlich gesellt ... zeitlich in die Entstehungsjahre eines der ergreifendsten Gedichte Goethes einzureihen" <sup>36</sup>. There is more reason for associating this drawing with the poem, if only because the central motif is here not a crescent but a full moon; and though there is no evidence from the context of the lyric that





Fig. 5. Aufgehender Mond am Fluß.



the moon is a full one, it is difficult to imagine it otherwise. Wahl does, however, miss one remarkable opportunity to relate one of these early Weimar drawings to the poem An den Mond. The chalk-drawing Aufgehender Mond am Fluss<sup>37</sup> has almost all the natural imagery of the lyric: the full moon rising over a low hill, its light reflected in the river and in a bank of mist rising from the water, with three trees -- one of them dead -- dominating the centre of the picture. The mood of the drawing is one of calm and twilight, with the shapes of the trees and the rushes in the foreground giving a slightly uncanny effect to the whole. Yet the landscape is not, certainly, that of Erkönig; Wahl tentatively suggests it might be one of the sketches mentioned by Goethe in a letter to Charlotte in May 1782<sup>38</sup>, and Münz places it after 1780<sup>39</sup>. Fennel, however, more reasonably suggests: "vom Motiv her ist eine Entstehung um 1777 wahrscheinlich", and refers to the diary entries and letters on moonlight<sup>40</sup>. The drawing could possibly relate to one or two of these letters<sup>41</sup>, but the only direct references to drawing moon-landscapes in the diaries are from January 1777<sup>42</sup>, whereas the picture is clearly not a winter scene. The uncertainty of dating of both the drawing and the poem allow no definite association of the two; as far as similarity of imagery and mood goes, however, this is the most



striking parallel between Goethe's landscape drawings and his lyric poetry that we have. The only other drawing from this period of any interest is the Brocken in Mondlicht<sup>43</sup>, a drawing of the snow-covered mountain with the forests at its base, which is generally accepted as having been drawn during the Harzreise of 1777, and which finds a descriptive parallel in the letter to Charlotte describing the Brocken by moonlight<sup>44</sup>.

It may be objected here that the correlation of artistic motifs with actual experience is a dubious method, either for the dating of a work or for its critical assessment. With regard to the first point, we have already indicated the danger of attempting to date lyric poems in this way<sup>45</sup>. There is, however, a distinction to be drawn here between lyric poetry and landscape drawing. The final version, or even the initial conception of a lyric poem uses images which can be taken by the poet from any field of experience at any time; the poet writing in summer is not necessarily restricted to using images or motifs taken literally or even remembered from a summer context, and this is surely true of any imagery in a lyric poem. We happen to know that Wanders Nachtlied II was written in very similar natural conditions to those which it describes -- if accounts of its genesis are accurate; but this is no reason to assume



that this is always the case.

With sketching or landscape drawing, however, the case would seem to be different; though it is not impossible for an artist to draw scenes from memory, this is the exception rather than the rule. In Goethe's case it can be safely assumed that he took subjects (for his landscape drawings at least) from immediate experience, and therefore that, while no exact dating is possible, it is perfectly justifiable to place certain drawings within a certain period, as we have done, largely on the evidence of the motifs and subject-matter of the drawing. For the second point, it is true that an examination of the moon-landscapes drawn by Goethe at this time will not throw much light on the interpretation of the lyrics dealing with the same subjects. It must be stressed again that this was not the purpose here, any more than it was in the enumeration of references in the diaries and letters. What has been established beyond doubt, however, is of relevance; namely, that in these early Weimar years the moon is a frequent and important motif in Goethe's writing, drawing and thinking. It is on the basis of this evidence that we can return to examine the central moon-lyric, and indeed one of the central poems, of this period.



### 3. An den Mond - First Version

Of the mass of critical -- and uncritical -- comment that has accumulated around the Weimarer Mondlied, a great part is devoted to extrinsic rather than intrinsic information. The two points around which controversy has centered are points which cannot be definitely explained unless the date of composition of the two versions can be fixed beyond doubt; unfortunately, in spite of ingenious and imaginative suggestions and calculations, this remains impossible, and seems likely to be so in future. The first point which has never been satisfactorily established one way or the other is whether the first version, or more specifically, these lines in the first version:

Wenn in Öder Winternacht  
Er vom Tode schwillt

refer to the death of Christel von Lasberg, drowned in the Ilm with a copy of Werther in her possession on 17th January 1778. The second is whether Charlotte von Stein's own version of the poem, An den Mond nach meiner Manier, was written before or after Goethe's revised version of the original -- that is, whether Charlotte was parodying Goethe's second version, or whether Goethe rewrote the



poem from Charlotte's model. These two problems have occupied very nearly as much time and space in critical literature as the interpretation of the poem itself; and depending on one's critical method, these problems assume more or less significance in a critical assessment. However, both points could affect an interpretation one way or another, and whether one regards such extrinsic considerations as relevant or not, it would be advisable to consider the first point seriously, if not both, before seeing the poem as it stands:

Füllest wieder 's liebe Tal  
Still mit Nebelglanz,  
Lösest endlich auch einmal  
Meine Seele ganz;

Breitest über mein Gefild  
Lindernd deinen Blick,  
Wie der Liebsten Auge mild  
Über mein Geschick.

Das du so beweglich kennst,  
Dieses Herz im Brand,  
Haltet ihr wie ein Gespenst  
An den Fluß gebannt,

Füllest wieder Busch und Tal  
Still mit Nebelglanz,  
Lösest endlich auch einmal  
Meine Seele ganz;

Breitest über mein Gefild  
Lindernd deinen Blick,  
Wie des Freundes Auge mild  
Über mein Geschick.

Jeden Nachklang fühlt mein Herz  
Froh- und trüber Zeit,  
Wandle zwischen Freud und Schmerz  
In der Einsamkeit.

Fließe, fließe, lieber Fluß!  
Nimmer werd ich froh,  
So verbrauchte Scherz und Kuß,  
Und die Treue so.

Ich besaß es doch einmal,  
Was so köstlich ist!  
Daß man doch zu seiner Qual  
Nimmer es vergißt!



Rausche, Fluß, das Tal entlang,  
Ohne Rast und Ruh,  
Rausche, flüstere meinem Sang  
Melodien zu,

Wenn in öder Winternacht  
Er vom Tode schwillt  
Und bei Frühlingslebens Pracht  
An den Knospen quillt.

Wenn du in der Winternacht  
Wütend überschwillst,  
Oder um die Frühlingspracht  
Jünger Knospen quillst.

Selig, wer sich vor der Welt  
Ohne Haß verschließt,  
Einen Mann am Busen hält  
Und mit dem genießt,

Selig, wer sich vor der Welt  
Ohne Haß verschließt,  
Einen Freund am Busen hält  
Und mit dem genießt,

Was, den Menschen unbewußt  
Oder wohl veracht,  
Durch das Labyrinth der Brust  
Wandelt in der Nacht.

Was, von Menschen nicht gewußt  
Oder nicht bedacht,  
Durch das Labyrinth der Brust  
Wandelt in der Nacht.

The extrinsic biographical and chronological problems surrounding the two versions of the poem are the subject of the appendix to this study<sup>46</sup>, of which only the general conclusions need be mentioned here. With regard to the first point, whether 1.14 in the first version is an allusion to the death of Christel von Lasberg, we must admit that a definite conclusion is impossible due to the uncertainty about the precise date of composition of the first version. From our point of view, however, the question is hardly relevant to the assessment of the poem, and need not therefore seriously be considered. With regard to the second point concerning the order in which Goethe's second version and Charlotte's version were written, the lack of evidence on dates of composition again makes an ultimate decision



difficult. However, unless we are prepared to accept that Charlotte was responsible for the successful and effective changes from the original which are common to both her version and Goethe's second version, as well as for the more banal elements which are unique to her version, we must assume that her An den Mond nach meiner Manier was written after, and is a bitter personal parody of, Goethe's second version. For the purposes of the following analysis I shall base my remarks on this assumption.

Recent criticism has, indeed, tended on the whole to ignore these extrinsic questions, and has tended to recognise in An den Mond, particularly in its final version, a poem which is inaccessible to a fully rational and exhaustive analysis<sup>47</sup>; and instead of attempting to show its logical progression, has stressed the associative processes by which the varying moods combine to produce the total effect<sup>48</sup>. And the first version does indeed have a unity of mood which can only be explained in terms of the central image of the poem, the moon. The image here has many of the associations which it had for Goethe in his earliest poetry; it is the "Gedankenfreund" of Klopstock/Werther, whose soft light evokes calm and reflective thought and feelings in the poet's



mind, which blurs and softens the contours of natural objects and gives peace. The association of moonlight and mist is still there, but it is no longer the Ossianic "Nebelschauer", but a calm and soothing "Nebelglanz". It is as if Faust's desire had been granted -- as if aspiration and striving had been, if not fulfilled, at least stilled for a moment, in the light of the moon.

The image -- for in this first version of the poem the moon is still very much a natural object, a motif in the nocturnal landscape much as it is in the drawings of this period -- does, however, show a development from the earlier moon-imagery of Goethe's lyric poetry. It is the development noted above, how the moon, from being simply an ornamental feature of an anacreontic landscape (Die schöne Nacht), from being the companion and confidant of the poet's erotic thoughts and dreams (An Luna), has accrued around it the associations of peace and release. The presentation of the image in An den Mond is the culmination of that development, the finest expression of the power and influence of the moon on Goethe's lyrical mood. It is generally regarded as the fullest expression of his attitude in the early Weimar years, of the wish for, or willingness to accept, seclusion -- the attitude of the poem Einschränkung:



Ich weiß nicht, was mir hier gefällt,  
 In dieser engen, kleinen Welt  
 Mit holdem Zauberband mich hält?  
 Verges ich doch, verges ich gern,  
 Wie seltsam mich das Schicksal leitet;  
 Und ach, ich fühle, nah und fern  
 Ist mir noch manches zubereitet.  
 O wäre doch das rechte Maß getroffen!  
 Was bleibt mir nun, als eingehüllt,  
 Von holdar Lebenskraft erfüllt,  
 In stiller Gegenwart die Zukunft zu erhoffen!

We have already pointed out the frequency with which the motif of the moon occurs during this period, and have suggested that, together with and perhaps due to its quality to soothe and release the mind from "des Tages Müh", it has become associated in Goethe's mind with the figure of the woman whose influence on Goethe was precisely that which is attributed to the moon in An den Mond.

Looking more closely at the first version of the poem, it will be seen that the identification of the moon's influence with that of the beloved is explicitly drawn in a simile, just as her image was associated with the motif in Jägers Abendlied:

Wie der Liebsten Auge mild  
 Über mein Geschick.

The first two stanzas are devoted to an address to the moon; of these two stanzas, the first two lines evoke the natural scene with remarkable economy of images. A full formal analysis is hardly needed to show how the



effect of peace and release is obtained; the metre, whether taken from H.L. Wagner or not, is perfectly suited to the mood, stressing the long vowels of the initial syllables, and allowing a natural enjambement between each couplet; the dominance of liquid consonants and of long vowels and diphthongs -- all contributes to the introspective mood induced by the natural scene, the moonlit valley. The second couplets of the first two stanzas are devoted to expressing the nature of the mood induced, and it is this that marks a progression in the associations of moonlight from those of the earlier lyrics. Apart from the association, or identification, of the moon with the beloved, the "lösend" and "lindernd" light of the moon also leads the thoughts of the poet away from the natural scene towards his own state of mind, his whole situation and position -- specifically and biographically, his situation in Weimar; but here the lyrical mood precludes any such consideration, and it is in terms of "Geschick" and the "Labyrinth der Brust" that the poem develops<sup>49</sup>.

Apart from the question whether the poem bears any relationship to the drowning of Christel von Laßberg, controversy has also centered around the curious syntax of the third stanza, namely who or what is meant by the "du" of l.9 and the "ihr" of l.11. The problem is not



difficult if we accept the close association of the moon and the "Liebste" of l.7; logically and syntactically, the "du" must refer to the moon, since it is the moon that is addressed in the second person in the first two stanzas, and since it is precisely to the moon that the poet appeals as confidant. The "du" can hardly be taken as addressed exclusively to the "Liebste", since only passing reference had been made to her in the simile of the previous stanza, and even in a poem based so much on a loosely associative development such grammatical freedom would seem odd<sup>50</sup>. The "ihr", then, must refer to the moon -- and someone else, presumably the "Liebste". Körner denies that this can be the case, because the beloved (or Charlotte, as he has it) "sozusagen gar nicht als leibhaftes Objekt ins Gedicht eingesetzt ist, sondern nur schemenhaft in der Metapher erscheint"<sup>51</sup>. He goes on to suggest that not Charlotte, but the Duke, and indeed the whole circle of people in Weimar, are alluded to here as holding the poet fast to the banks of the Ilm, and that the feeling expressed here is that of the poem Ilmenau:

Von fremden Zonen bin ich her verschlagen  
Und durch die Freundschaft festgebannt.

This interpretation, of course, is based on Körner's claim that the poem is celebrating not love but friendship<sup>52</sup>.



There is indeed no reason why the poem should be interpreted in this way; but even if we accept that these lines do express Goethe's mood of withdrawal and affirmation of love and friendship in the small community of Weimar, there is surely no need to insist on finding such specific references for such an allusion in a lyric poem. Nor is there any reason why we should not read the "Ihr" as referring to both the moon and the "Liebste", since these are the two salient images in the first part of the poem<sup>53</sup>. not

From the last line of the third stanza the moon ceases to be the dominant image. This does not mean that the mood evoked in moonlight at the beginning of the poem does not remain; but the reference to the river at the end of the third stanza is developed, and the river becomes the central image of the fourth. This is the result of a series of associations by which the poem has developed naturally and organically; the light of the moon, shining through mist, has released the poet's conscious mind and left him free to hold an interior monologue. The moon on the valley has called to mind the face of the "Liebste", his whole purpose, his "Geschick", and has awakened the desire to remain close to the familiar river, to which he feels bound as though by a spell. The image of the moon and that of the river, or more gen-



erally that of water, are closely associated for Goethe; we have already touched on this association, and it is one which will assume more importance in the future. There is no need to look for a specific incident such as a suicide to explain the river-imagery in this poem: the association is as natural as it is frequent in Goethe's poetry<sup>54</sup>.

From the allusion to the river, then, develops a picture of the river in two different seasons of the year; it is interesting, moreover, that it is nothing more than this. Fräulein von Lasberg apart, the river here is simply a nature-image, and has little explicit or implicit metaphorical reference. The same is true of the image of the moon; its reference as a metaphor extends only as far as its associative value. This is very different from the function of the two images in the revised version of the poem, where, as we shall see, the moon and river assume a certain symbolic value. In the first version the motif of the moon has very definite personal associative value for the poet, but there is no question of attempting to classify these associations in terms of "image" and "meaning"<sup>55</sup>; as such, it could well be argued that the image is a more natural and less conscious one in the first version, and that it has suffered accordingly in the second. The moon and river in the first version are not used as polar forces as in



the second -- it is sufficient that the reflection of the moon in the river should lead the emphasis of the poem from the one image to the other.

The last two stanzas turn away from the natural scene altogether, and deal exclusively with the "inscape" of the mind, revealed under the mysterious effect of moonlight. The conclusion is affirmative, bejahend; there is none of the panic and struggle to come to terms which is at least implied in the second version. The "Herz in Brand" is the only indication we have in the first version of any form of conflict or tension, and that is soon resolved under the light of the moon. There remains the question of the "Mann" of l.19; and no immediate answer can be offered. If we take it that the poet is here putting the final stanzas into the mouth of a woman, then the whole poem can be interpreted as erotic in tone -- or at least as being expressed in terms of a man-woman relationship<sup>56</sup>. If we consider that it is the poet (or the lyrische Ich) speaking, then we are forced to the conclusion that this part of the poem at least is a celebration of friendship -- which isolates the "Liebste" of l.7 as an inconsistency, unless we take it again that the poet is talking to himself in the first four stanzas, and to the "Liebste" in the last two. Or, finally, the poem could be read as Wechselgespräch.



with a woman and a man speaking each stanza in turn.

This problem, however, is not central to our analysis of the image of the moon; indeed, as we have said, at this stage of the poem the moon does not appear to play such a central rôle in the poem as its title might suggest. Yet its influence still dominates these last lines; the inner mind of the poet is revealed, the "Labyrinth der Brust" brings the poem back finally to the introspective mood with which it opened, and the mood of affirmative withdrawal is equated with the nocturnal scene, giving the poem its full lyrical unity:

Was, den Menschen unbewusst  
Oder wohl veracht,  
Durch das Labyrinth der Brust  
Wandelt in der Nacht.

#### 4. An den Mond - Second Version

In the revised version of the poem, no radical formal change has been made in the first two or the last two stanzas; it is difficult to agree with Elena, for example, when he argues that the changes from "'s liebe Tal" to "Busch und Tal", and from "oder wohl veracht" to "oder nicht bedacht" have lost the spontaneity of the original -- such judgments are highly subjective<sup>57</sup>.



The change in 1.1 is consistent with a common feature of the second version, the pairing of words which is characteristic of Goethe's style at the time<sup>58</sup>. The change in the last stanza hardly affects the poem; Elema again sees it as a superfluous Verlegenheitsreim, but it could equally well be argued that the "wohl veracht" of the first version, though perhaps the sounds were more appropriate to the hushed mood of the final stanza, is really no more or less happy, since its exact meaning is obscure.

The other changes in these four stanzas are more far-reaching, and are not purely formal changes. For the "Liebste" and the "Mann" of the first version is substituted in both cases the word "Freund"; and this change could well alter the whole bias of the interpretation. Unless we agree with Körner that the first version is not erotic in tone -- in which case the second could be seen simply as a more clearly formulated extension of the feelings expressed in the original -- then the revised version does appear to have been "enterotisiert" (Elema); it is no longer a love-poem, but one in praise of friendship. The biographical reference for this friendship is not really relevant here<sup>59</sup>, but we are forced to accept that the second version is less immediately passionate, or erotic, and that the elegiac



mood introduced in the new material -- particularly in stanzas 3-5 -- is considerably more reflective than the middle section of the first version.

The elegiac mood which distinguishes the revised version is introduced at once with the first entirely reshaped stanza, the third. Here the moon is no longer appealed to to release or calm the "Herz im Brand", but serves a different function. The twilight of the natural scene, evoked in the opening stanzas, corresponds to the twilight mood of the poet. The moon plays its traditional rôle of awakening memories -- but this is not all; the metaphor of twilight is extended to express the poet's position between the polarities which run through the middle section of the poem: "... Da findet er sich im ungewissen Zwielficht eines Zwischenreichs: 'zwischen Freud und Schmerz', wie die Erinnerung an 'froh- und trüber Zeit' sie aufregt, zwischen Gegenwart und Vergangenheit sodann, und -- alles übergreifend und zusammenschließend -- zwischen dem ruhigen Glanz des Mondes und dem rastlosen Rauschen der Ilm" <sup>60</sup>. The mood, however, is not one of violent oscillation between the extremes of "Freud und Schmerz", but essentially a position mid-way between the two; the mild, reflected light of the moon evokes, not these emotions themselves, but only their reflection or recollection -- their "Nachklang" in the poet's heart.



At this stage in the poem the river is introduced, abruptly and apparently arbitrarily. Whereas in the first version the third stanza had included the river as an organic part of the natural scene, and where the image had been developed in the following lines of the fourth stanza, the second version has no such previous allusion to the river which might prepare for its introduction into the poem. As Schneider points out, it is rather literal-minded to explain this apparent break in the continuity of the poem's development by imagining the poet simply coming across the river in the course of his walk in the moonlight<sup>61</sup>; he points out that the image of the river suggested itself naturally enough as an appropriate image, or symbol, for the elegiac mood of transience expressed in the third stanza.

This is true to a certain extent; but the image of the river must still be seen in relation to the other central image, the moon, from which the river has, in these middle stanzas, taken over the dominant rôle in the poem. Here we can see the change which has affected the function of these two images, both present in the original version. They have both assumed symbolic significance; moon and river are no longer simply elements of the nocturnal landscape, but have come to represent the permanence and lasting validity of friend-



ship and non-ephemeral human values on the one hand, symbolised in the calm and steady light of the moon, or in the timeless permanence of the moon itself, and on the other hand the dynamic image of flowing water reflects the passing of the seasons and the transience which this implies. It is hardly necessary to point out that this is not the only use Goethe makes of the image of flowing water to represent such ideas<sup>62</sup>.

The elegiac mood is expressed fully in the address to the river: "Fließe"; with the shift of emphasis from the static image of the moon to the dynamic one of the river, the poem assumes a more urgent and sombre mood, which reaches its lowest point precisely mid-way in its development, in stanza 5<sup>63</sup>. After an explicit analogy between the river and transience:

So verrauschte Scherz und Kuß,  
Und die Treue so,

the isolation of the poet's twilight mood is overpoweringly expressed in a crisis of memory, and the poem reaches a critical stage in its development. From this point there seems no immediate and obvious way of regaining the calm mood and equanimity of the opening stanzas; the almost desperate note in the repeated use of the particle "doch" in the fifth stanza suggests that at this stage the thoughts of the poet are still backward-



looking.

With the sixth stanza a further change of mood sets in with the no longer vocative but imperative address to the river; and at once the river itself, previously an image of flux and transience, assumes a new significance. The appeal in this stanza: "Rausche, Fluß!" not only links the two parts of the poem by echoing the earlier "Fließe, fließe, lieber Fluß", but is also, by its very sound, a more positive and less elegiac appeal than the nostalgic 1.13. The poet sees in the river, itself constantly in flux and yet permanent, the very means of imposing his own lasting value on transience; the mood of the fourth and fifth stanzas gives way to the acknowledgment that the poet can, by means of his creative gift, of "des Menschen Kraft, im Dichter offenbart", achieve some form of "Dauer im Wechsel". By the very act of incorporating the image of flux and transience into his poetry, the poet has overcome that transience itself, and the urgency of stanzas six and seven reflects the almost panic insistence on the turbulence of the river; the elegy is forgotten, and hope has been restored in the middle of crisis<sup>64</sup>.

In this context, Goethe could have done little better than to reintroduce here the stanzas of the original version; but he could not take them over entirely unchanged. The revision of the line "Er von Tode schwillt"



has of course been seen by interested critics as a removal of the allusion to the suicide which had "inspired" the first version; a more satisfactory explanation is that, given the new context of the poem, this line, with its reference to the barren and desolate river in winter, hardly fits with the idea in the revised version of the poet taking his melody from its "Rauschen". A more positive line with a potentially more creative -- and, to support the metaphor of song from 1.23, a more auditory -- association would be more suitable: "Wütend überschwillst". These two natural images, of the river in different moods, again reflect the polarity of feeling which runs through the poem: "Freud und Schmerz", "frohe und trübe Zeit", -- and spring and winter.

So the poem returns to the state of calm and peace with which it opened; the image of the river gives way again to the mood of moonlight and twilight -- and here Goethe had only to return to the closing stanzas of the first version. The change from "Mann" to "Freund" only brings the end of the poem more closely into relationship with the opening stanzas, and gives it a clearer unity than it had in the original version -- we do not need to search for explanations or rationalisations for the apparent inconsistency of "Liebste" and "Mann" <sup>65</sup>. The poem closes, as in the first version, with an affirma-



tion, an acceptance of secluded happiness -- but here a more positive and more valid affirmation than that of the first version since it has been achieved at the cost of a struggle not easily won. The peace and stability of these last stanzas must be seen in terms of this struggle between the polarities of the second version, and which is peculiar to it; as Mayer puts it, "den inneren Vorgang als Ganzes kann man als einen seelischen Heilungsprozeß bezeichnen" <sup>66</sup>.

For all this, any exhaustive or definitive interpretation of the Weimarer Mondlied remains elusive; not only the dates, the biographical references and the sometimes inexplicable changes in the text from the first to the second version, but the meaning of the poem itself, particularly in the revised version, is unresolved. The last stanza in particular, with its reference to the "Labyrinth der Brust", and what is "von Menschen ... nicht bedacht" seems to leave questions implicitly posed but unanswered <sup>67</sup>. We can here only sum up the progression between the two versions and give some indication of how the moon, the really central image in both, has come to hold for Goethe a particular significance at this stage in his development as a poet.

It is still possible to see the first version as



a love-poem, and in particular a poem addressed to the person whose "Blick" is so like that of the moon in its effect on the heart and mind of the poet -- Charlotte von Stein. The moon in this version is an image taken from nature, but not any image; it is one which until now had for Goethe particular associations, those which we have traced through the pre-Weimar lyrics and prose-works, and which in the early years in Weimar came to be associated with Charlotte herself. The first version of An den Mond is a full and unconditional acceptance of all that Charlotte, and Weimar, meant and offered to him -- peace, seclusion, a new beginning and a period of patient acceptance.

Und ach, ich fühle, nah und fern  
Ist mir noch manches zubereitet;

-- Goethe wrote these lines in 1776, probably before the original version of An den Mond. It is hardly fanciful to suggest that the promise -- or warning -- of these lines was near to fulfilment when he wrote the second version, which every indication places at some time shortly before his departure for Italy. The second version is no longer exclusively devoted to Frau von Stein -- and the moon no longer has the explicit association in the poem which the first version had with the woman to whom Goethe's thoughts had turned so often in the moonlit



nights between 1776 and 1780. The calm light of the moon now evokes in the poet's mind not simply "der Liebsten Auge" and its compelling hold on his "Geschick", but the whole sum of his past joys and sorrows. The terms of reference of the second version go much further and wider than those of the first, and in the first instance lead the poet not to calm acceptance and resignation, but to a panic crisis which is overcome only when he has recognised the value of his creative gift. Further, the moon has now assumed its own symbolic reference, by means of which the poet is able to regain his perspective, and it is in terms of the symbols of polarity, the moon and the river, that he resolves the crisis<sup>68</sup>.

So the two versions of the Mondlied can be seen in their development as reflecting one aspect of Goethe's own development during the period between his arrival in Weimar and the departure for Italy -- this not necessarily with the strictest reference to the details of his relationship with Frau von Stein, though it seems clear that the development of his attitudes and outlook during these years was deeply influenced by the relationship -- but, in a wider sense, the poem reflects on the one hand the development of Goethe's use of imagery in a lyric poem, from description to representation, from motif to symbol, or at least to the use of motif with symbolic



overtones; and on the other hand the development of the associations which have accrued around the image of the moon, which itself, as a leitmotif in the writings of this period, expresses the changes which Goethe's poetic development has undergone:

"Der Dichter, ein zum Manne reifender Jüngling, hebt sich aus der Flut und wendet den Blick zu dem geistigen Licht des Mondes. Das ist ein Vorgang, der in den ersten Weimarer Jahren für Goethe die tiefste, mit immer neuen Worten umkreiste symbolische Bedeutung gewinnt, der auch das Zwischenreich des Liedes An den Mond erst ganz erschließt. Der Fluß strömt weiter; aber der Mensch taucht auf, schaut in die Höhe und läßt das flüssige Element zurück ... in der silbernen Kühle, die sein Haupt umschwebt, rinnt alles Bewegende und Erregende nieder und wird Erinnerung ... Die Seele ... schaut ihr wandelbares Leben an im Fluß; ihr wandellooses Sein erglänzt in dem Gestirn<sup>69</sup> ... der Anfang und das Ende des Liedes ist dem Mond und der wie Mondlicht milden, lindernden Ruhe des geliebten Menschen gewidmet..."<sup>70</sup>.



## 5. Swiss Journey

In September 1779 Goethe visited Switzerland for the second time, this time in company with Karl-August. We have a much fuller record of this journey than of his previous visit in 1775, and not only are the descriptions of the Swiss landscape more detailed and more lengthy than the reports of the first journey, but the attitude of the poet towards the grandiose scenery appears to have been tempered by a desire for closer and more intimate observation. The years in Weimar have done much to control the exuberance of the earlier years; indeed, Staiger sees this period of Goethe's inner development in the early Weimar years as being of crucial importance not simply to Goethe's creative work but to his whole personality<sup>71</sup>.

In the descriptions of the second Schweizer Reise<sup>72</sup>, it is hardly surprising that the moon, which occupied so much of Goethe's attention in the early Weimar years, should recur frequently as a feature of the Swiss mountain landscape. Moreover, we find not only casual passing references to the effects of moonlight in the mountains<sup>73</sup>, Goethe also takes careful note of the play of light and mist, of the cloud and atmospheric effects



which he could study in the mountains much better than in the hilly countryside of Thüringen. But it is no longer the Ossianic "Nebelschauer" or the ghostly "Dämmerung" of the earlier poems and proseworks that we find described here; the dim light of the moon no longer evokes the spirits of the dead, or forebodings of catastrophe, but it is the effects of the natural phenomena, of moonlight on mist and cloud formations, that intrigue Goethe and lead him to quasi-scientific observation:

Der Nebel lag im Thal wie wir herunter kamen, der Mond schien hoch drauf, wir sahen einen Mondbogen im Nebel ganz geformt. Breiter als der Regenbogen aber niedrig weil der Mond hoch stand... (24th October, 1779; WA.IV.4.95); ... Der fast volle Mond kam herauf und wir immer höher ... Wir glaubten unter uns einen großen See zu erblicken, indem ein tiefer Nebel das ganze Thal, was wir übersehen konnten, ausfüllte. Wir kamen ihm endlich näher, sahen einen weissen Bogen den der Mond drinn bildete und wurden bald ganz vom Nebel eingewickelt (28th October, 1779; WA.IV.4.99-100).

-- and a more lyrical passage in the letter of 4th November to Charlotte:

... Angenehm frisch war 's im Thal, das letzte Mondviertel ging vor der Sonne hell auf und erfreute uns, weil man es selten so zu sehen gewohnt ist, leichte, einzelne Nebel stiegen aus den Felsenrizen aufwärts, als wenn die Morgenluft junge Geister aufweckte, die Lust fühlten, ihre Brust der Sonne entgegen zu tragen und sie an ihren Blicken zu vergülden ... (WA.IV.4.124-5).



Not only the moonlight reflected in mist and cloud, however, occupied Goethe's close attention in Switzerland; the association of moonlight and water, and the reflected light of the moon, frequent enough associations in these years, are not confined to the lyric poetry alone. We have already noted, in the letters and diaries in Weimar, the pleasing and attractive effect that Goethe found in the reflection of moonlight in the Ilm; and in the Swiss lakes he observes the same phenomenon<sup>74</sup>;

Man pries die Gegend sehr und erzählte daß eigentlich der beste Weg von Rolle hinauf gehe, eine Chaussee bis zu oberst des Bergs, und daß wir zu Nacht besonders bey Mondschein oben sein könnten ... durch Tannen Wälder stiegen wir immer den Jura hinan, und sahen den See im Duft und den Widerschein des Mondes drinne ... (24th October, 1779; WA.IV.4.94-5);

Again on 26th October he writes to Charlotte:

... Vom Camin, wo ich den Glanz des Monds über den ganzen See gar herrlich sehn kann ... Die Nacht ist klar, ruhig, der See still und der breite Widerschein des Monds drin unendlich schön (WA.IV.4.96).

and again from Geneva on 28th October:

... Auch nun gingen wir ungern weg, die Pferde fanden wir in St. Sergues, und daß nichts fehle, stieg der Mond auf und leuchtete uns nach Nion, wo unter Weegs unsere gespannten Sinnen sich wieder lieblich falten konnten, wieder freundlich



Wurden und mit frischer Lust aus den  
 Fenstern des Wirthshausses den breit-  
 schwimmenden Wiederglanz des Monds im  
 ganz reinen See genießen konnten ...  
 (WA.IV.4.110).

These descriptions of the moon reflected in water are no more and no less than closely observed natural phenomena; yet in view of their very frequency, and in view of the very close associations between the calm light of the moon and the element of water, whether restless, as in some of the lyrics, or brooding and dark, as in the Schweiger Reiss, they are interesting. The effect of this phenomenon on Goethe's imagination has, in the works of the early Weimar years, been almost entirely positive; whether he has bathed in the moonlit river, seen the face of the moon as soothing and calming as "der Liebsten Auge", or whether he has used the images to represent the polarities of permanence and transience. If the moon has evoked painful or distressing memories or thoughts, they have been quickly overcome, and nature has played the rôle of comforter and refuge for the poet. Only the lines written to Frau von Stein warning her of the uncannily attractive power of water, "gefährlich anziehend", particularly when the moon and stars are reflected in it, has struck anything like a sinister or demonic note.



## 6. Demonic Moon-Landscapes

If the nature-imagery of the early Weimar poetry was predominantly "tröstlich" in its effect on the poet's imagination, earlier, in the Frankfurt poems, and even in the lyrics of the Leipziger Liederbuch, the obverse of this benevolent nature occasionally broke through to reveal a demonic aspect beneath the surface. Already in An Luna a slightly macabre element had been introduced; the misty moonlight is associated with "traurig abgeschiedne Seelen" and "nächtge Vögel ... aus tagverschlossnen Höhlen". At this stage, however, Goethe was to a great extent reflecting the Mondsucht à la mode of the 18th century; not the sentimental moon of Empfindsamkeit, but that of the closely related genre, the Poésie de la Nuit et des Tombeaux, the Ossianic shiver which the ghostly light of the moon evoked in the sensible soul of the contemporary Schwärmer. We have also pointed out this macabre and sentimental element in the moon-imagery of Werther<sup>75</sup>; but the most vivid and original evocation of demonic nature in these early works is undoubtedly Willkommen und Abschied, where the moon, appearing fitfully and mournfully between the clouds, transforms the natural scene into a menacing, claustrophobic nightmare. The menace of demonic nature,



however, cannot at this stage combat the sheer exuberance and energy of Goethe's affirmative vitality, as the last half of the poem shows; indeed, in this context the horrors of the first part are ineffectual and even unconvincing; and similarly Faust, confronted by the "schröckliches Gesicht" of the Erdgeist, almost succumbs, but with titanic presumption defies the spirit before his swift return to banality with the entry of his famulus.

The situation is different in Weimar; the triumphant youthful exuberance, or arrogance, has gone, and though Goethe seems to have more conscious control over the forces of nature which he represents in his lyrics -- the controlled panic of An den Mond shows precisely that Goethe is using his material more consciously, with more deliberate art -- yet he is still aware of the Kehrseite of nature, and uses it to great effect in two of his Weimar ballads. In both poems the moon plays an unobtrusive part in the action as a whole, but in both Goethe's lyrical feeling for nature is expressed rather more than one might expect in a narrative genre; and the moon has in this respect a significant function, explicitly in Der Fischer, and implicitly in Erlkönig.

If we are to believe Goethe's own later comment, Der Fischer expresses nothing more than "bloß das Gefühl des Wassers ... das Anmutige, was uns im Sommer lockt,



uns zu baden" <sup>76</sup>. In view of the distance which separates the poem itself and this statement, however, and still more in view of the words to Frau von Stein on the dangerous attractive power of water, this remark must be treated as something of an understatement, if not as simply misleading <sup>77</sup>. The mysterious seductive attraction of water, here personified in the figure of the siren and expressed in the most suggestive auditory effects, is again associated with the reflection of the planets in water:

Labt sich die liebe Sonne nicht,  
Der Mond sich nicht im Meer?

-- The "Abglanz der Sterne des Himmels" is the feature that most compellingly constitutes the fascination and allurement of water; in reflection they are doubly beautiful. This is one of the early lyrical images which reflects Goethe's scientific interest in entoptic images, the effect of Spiegelung which is throughout his work frequently associated with the image of the moon <sup>78</sup>. Just as the moon held the poet "an den Fluss gebannt", just as Goethe had felt the relaxing and healing properties offered by bathing in the cool light of the moon -- "Bad ab im Monde des Tages Müh" -- just as Faust had longed for oblivion and release from his "Wissensqualm" by bathing in the moonlit dew, so here the human figure



is enticed to leave his own element for a sphere of oblivion, where he will be "erst gesund". The sun and moon, the symbols of order and permanence<sup>79</sup>, lose their stable character when they are "feuchtverklärt" and assimilated into the element of flux:

Kehrt wellenatmend ihr Gesicht  
Nicht doppelt schöner her?

The coolness of the depths, contrasted with the "Todesglut" of the dry element, is expressed in terms of dew:

Lockt dich dein eigen Angesicht  
Nicht her in ewgen Tau?

-- once again Goethe uses the traditional association of dew, its coolness and its healing properties, with the light of the moon, as in Urfaust:

In deinem Thau gesund mich baden.

Here, however, in Der Fischer, the "Gesundheit" offered by the watery element is destruction; Faust had appealed for release; but the fisher finds it only in a half voluntary, half compulsive abdication. The water-sprite of this ballad is no mere mythical hobgoblin or figure of folkloric superstition, though these may be her origins; it is the very way in which Goethe identifies the



figure with the sinister attractive power of the element of water itself that gives this ballad its essential ambiguity and its peculiar effect:

Halb sog sie ihn, halb sank er hin,  
Und ward nicht mehr gesehn.

Ambiguity is an essential feature of the other demonic ballad, Erlkönig; what distinguishes Goethe's ballad from the original Danish Ellerkrone, or Erlkönigs Tochter is that where the latter, more deeply rooted in superstition and folklore, sees the apparitions as real, albeit fantastic phenomena, in Goethe's version the ballad is based on the conflict between perception and deception, on the tension between the different perspectives of father and son. "Es scheinen die alten Weiden so grau" -- the word "scheinen", with its ambiguity of meaning, gives an indication that there is something extra-sensory in the child's reaction to the nocturnal landscape which has for him such a fatally demonic aspect.

But what is it, precisely, that gives the landscape such terrifying dimensions? In the first instance, it is clearly the sick child's overheated and feverish imagination; but its mind must have some basis for the vision. And though the moon is, admittedly, nowhere explicitly mentioned in the poem, it would still seem that one of the most likely causes of this transformation of the land-



scape is precisely the effect of moonlight, the clair-obscur effect which fascinated Goethe, and which we find represented in the moon-lyrics of the Frankfurt and Weimar years; it is perhaps the dim moonlight that transforms the "Nebelstreif" into the "Kron und Schweif" of the phantom<sup>80</sup>. Just as the moon had accompanied the "leidenschaftliches Unternehmen" of Willkommen und Abschied, and turned familiar natural objects into grotesque and menacing shapes, and just as the whole range of night-marish rides through the night which were popular themes for the poets of Sturm und Drang had featured the moon as an indispensable element of the nocturnal landscape<sup>81</sup>, so here the moon reflected on the silver-grey leaves of the willows forms in the mist a series of fantastic shapes. It is the moon which, more than anything else, discloses the demonic aspect of nature -- the motif which more than any other is associated with demons and spirits in folklore and literature<sup>82</sup>.

This association of spirits with moonlight is found in a poem written two years earlier than Erlkönig, and which has some elements in common with it. On the night of 14/15th October 1780 Goethe wrote to Frau von Stein:

Der Mond ist unendlich schön. Ich  
bin durch die neuen Wege gelaufen da sieht  
die Nacht himalisch drein Die Elfen sangen.



Um Mitternacht wenn die Menschen erst schlafen  
 Dann scheint uns der Mond  
 Dann leuchtet uns der Stern,  
 Wir wandeln und singen  
 Und tanzen erst gern.

Um Mitternacht wenn die Menschen erst schlafen  
 Auf Wiesen an den Erlen  
 Wir suchen unsern Baum  
 Und wandeln und singen  
 Und tanzen einen Traum. (WA.IV.4.314-5).

Not only does this slight poem have, in a certainly less sinister and undeveloped form, some of the motifs of Erlkönig -- spirits dancing by moonlight, the dream-like atmosphere of the scene; there is also here the allusion to alder-trees, with which the later ballad also appears to be associated. In the stage-direction to the scene in the Singspiel in which the Erlkönig ballad appears, Die Fischerin, the stage-direction stipulates the same trees: Unter hohen Erlen an Flüssen stehen gerstreute Fischerhütte (WA.I.12.113). And the very title of the ballad shows the association of alder-trees with the spirits, demonic or otherwise, which dance by moonlight<sup>83</sup>.

The verses which Goethe wrote to Charlotte are, however, different in mood and effect from the dramatic and menacing mood of Erlkönig. Moreover, this ballad represents the fullest expression of the demonic forces of nature in Goethe's works; he never again evokes the same suffocating panic of the boy's vision, or even the



more meretricious horrors of Willkommen und Abschied, and the conflict between the rational, conscious perception of nature and the intuitive feeling for its demonic and destructive forces is never again presented in such stark terms. The Walpurgisnacht, by contrast, is almost burlesque, and Mephisto's salutary sarcasm safeguards Faust against the horrific visions of the Brocken. The moon plays a part in the Walpurgisnacht, but it is a poor rôle:

Wie traurig steigt die unvollkommene Scheibe 84  
 Des roten Monds mit später Glut heran  
 Und leuchtet schlecht, das man bei jedem Schritte  
 Vor einen Baum, vor einen Felsen rennt!  
 Erlaub, das ich ein Irrlicht bitte ... (vv. 3851-5).

The moon features as a ghostly Stilmittel in two further ballads, written very much later, and has importance only as a conventional motif in the macabre scene; in Hochzeitlied (1802) and Der Totentanz of 1813, in both of which Goethe is drawing on superstition and folklore for his images and themes. In the second ballad, particularly, the moon illuminates the action and recurs as a leitmotif through the poem much in the same way as it does in Bürger's Lenore or in the popular ballads of Annette<sup>85</sup>:

Der Mond, der hat alles ins Hells gebracht,  
 Der Kirchhof, er liegt wie an Tage ...



Der Mond, und noch immer er scheint so hell  
 Zum Tanz, den sie schauderlich führen ...

Schon trübet der Mond sich, verschwindenden Scheins,  
 Die Glocke, sie donnert ein mächtiges Eins,  
 Und unten zerschellt das Gerippe.

These later motifs or devices of moonlight are, however, a long way from the hostile landscape of Erlkönig, where the effect of the twilight scene is to transform the familiar into the demonic. Moreover, Der Fischer and Erlkönig mark something of a break in Goethe's perception and representation of nature in general; though in a sense nature is seen in a negative perspective in these ballads, they have this in common with the more positive attitude of lyrics like An den Mond -- that Goethe still sees nature with a personal, subjective vision. On the whole, however, Goethe's attitude towards nature in the pre-Italian years shows a gradual weakening of the early exuberance of the Strasbourg and Frankfurt lyrics<sup>86</sup>, and the deeply-felt and expressed sympathy with nature which still runs through most of the Weimar lyrics is at once a climax and turning-point in Goethe's attitude to nature. The early Schwärmerei is being replaced by a more steady and intent vision, a more detached and scientific, but for all that no less imaginative Schauen.



## 7. Pre-Italy

Not long after Erlkönig, Goethe was to write lines which seem to mark a radical break with his earlier nature-lyrics:

Denn unführend  
Ist die Natur:  
Es leuchtet die Sonne  
Über Böse und Gute,  
Und den Verbrecher  
Glänzen wie den Besten  
Der Mond und die Sterne.

(Das Göttliche)

These lines contradict curiously the feeling for nature which lies behind the early Weimar lyrics; the moon, which had a few years before struck such an intimate response in the poet's inner "Gefühl" now shines indifferently on good and bad. But these lines must be seen in their context -- and not only in their immediate textual context, but in the context of the development of Goethe's whole attitude. It is at this stage that his interest turns to an appraisal of nature, not simply in its external phenomena, and the significance and value of these external phenomena for the personal emotions and feelings of the poet, but a quasi-scientific study of nature, and of man's relationship with it. What preoccupies Goethe from around 1780 onwards is his awakening



interest in the causal laws governing organic nature.

It is also in these years that Goethe's official duties in Weimar lead him to take a new interest in geology, mining, botany and geographical studies, and already in the reports of the second Schweizer Reise we saw that his interest in meteorological phenomena was not purely that of a poet who saw in the mists and clouds, and the moonlight reflected in them, only potential images for his lyrics -- though later on his scientific studies are to play a considerable part in the formulation of much of his poetic imagery.

Goethe's official journeys through the State of Weimar lead him to look beyond the purely aesthetic aspect of nature to the laws governing rocks, plants and human beings, and the interdependence of these varying aspects of nature. It is in this period that the study of granite leads to the essay of 1784, where we have the first indication of the Urphänomen theory, later supported by similar speculations on bones and plants. In 1782 Goethe wrote to Frau von Stein of his interest in human geography:

Es ist ein erhabenes, wundervolles  
Schauspiel wenn ich nun über Berge und  
Felder reite, da mir die Entstehung und  
Bildung der Oberfläche unserer Erde und  
die Nahrung welche Menschen draus ziehen  
zu gleicher Zeit deutlich und anschaulich  
wird... (WA.IV.5.308).



It would be a mistake to assume that Goethe's scientific preoccupation with nature excluded his lyrical perception of it. It is true that he later looked back condescendingly on his earlier efforts to comprehend nature by means of intuitive feeling rather than by objective scrutiny<sup>87</sup>; but the scientific and lyrical spheres were by no means exclusive. The discovery of the intermaxillary bone, far from being a startlingly original discovery, was a result only of Goethe's desire to show that man was physically, though not morally, closely related to the animal kingdom; and it is this that he expresses in turn in his lyric poetry, which in the later years before the Italienische Reise becomes concerned more with human questions than with the lyrical expression of natural phenomena, with the Grenzen der Menschheit and with Das Göttliche:

Nur allein der Mensch  
Vermag das Unmögliche;  
Er unterscheidet,  
Wählet und richtet ...

It is, however, some time yet before Goethe devotes himself to scientific observation of the moon<sup>88</sup>; the only indication we have until now of a less than lyrical perception of the moon is in the Schweizer Reise. The moon-lyrics of the early Weimar years still belong very firmly to the youthful, lyrical, identification with nature.



But from 1780 until the Italienische Reise -- with the exception of the revised version of An den Mond -- the moon hardly appears as a lyrical motif in any new way in Goethe's works<sup>89</sup>, and even the diaries and letters between 1780 and 1786 contain far less references to the moon than in the years between 1775 and 1780.

Goethe's early preoccupation with the image of the moon reaches its fullest development precisely at the time when his relationship with Charlotte von Stein is at its deepest and most harmonious; and though it is true that biographical evidence can tell us little about the intrinsic value of lyric poetry, the close association, or even identification, of the image with Charlotte at this time cannot be ignored. For it was during the early Weimar years that Goethe's lyrical works were at their most personal, that biography and creative development were most closely linked (with the possible exception of the years of the West-östliche Divan<sup>90</sup>); and, more particularly, it is in the person of Charlotte von Stein that he saw embodied and personified the qualities which at that time he most urgently needed and desired<sup>91</sup>.

So, too, the image of the moon seems for a time to recede from Goethe's poetic consciousness to the same degree and virtually at the same time as Charlotte's influence over him begins to fade<sup>92</sup>; it is indicative



enough that the poem which in its original version clearly expressed Goethe's affection for and debt to her should, in its later revision, lose this close personal association -- a fact that evidently did not escape her attention when she bitterly parodied the same poem. In Italy, the image of the moon does not disappear from Goethe's work in the same way as Charlotte effectively disappears from his personal life; but the moon certainly no longer has the deeply personal and intimate significance for him that it had in the letters and lyrics of the early Weimar years. As he himself wrote from Rome<sup>93</sup>,

... So haben Sonne und Mond ...  
hier ein ganz anderes Geschäft als  
anderer Orten ...



## Chapter Four

1. Iphigenie and Tasso
2. Italy
3. The Moon in Eclipse
4. Observationes Lunae
5. The Novels



# 1. Iphigenie and Tasso

It would be wrong to assume that the profound influence of Frau von Stein on Goethe's thought and feelings, which is reflected to such an extent in the poems of the early Weimar years, ceased to make itself felt as abruptly as Goethe's departure for Italy put an end to their previous intimacy in Weimar, or that the image of Charlotte, in an idealised and at times barely recognisable form, was not to recur in his works to the very end of his life<sup>1</sup>. This is not to say that we should set out across Goethe's works to identify Frau von Stein in every manifestation of womanhood, purity or peace -- or any of the attributes that might be associated with her -- with a view to establishing a catalogue of possible or probable references. There would be no end to this search, and even less purpose.

On the other hand, whatever the fate of their personal relationship, it can fairly be said that the character and personality of Charlotte was one of the major contributions and influences which went to form Goethe's figure of ideal womanhood, which recurs variously as Iphigenie, Helen, and ultimately in conceptual form as das Ewig-Weibliche. The moon, the archetypal symbol of



woman, was the image most closely associated with her in the early Weimar works; she has also been compared with "Madonna, die gen Himmel fährt". The notion of purity, the calm, cool, and at times apparently unattainable figure of the immaculate woman<sup>2</sup>, was now to be exemplified in the priestess of Diana. Orest, the desperate seeker for peace and refuge from the furies, finds his release under the influence of a sister who serves the Goddess of the Moon, and who, like the moon, stands chaste and aloof from the world of intrigue and cunning. The broad lines of the theme of Iphigenie immediately recall the earlier lyrics of the hunter and the wanderer, "Ohne Rast und Ruh", "Voll Unmut und Verdruss", "Des Treibens müde", who seek release in the still light of the moon and the influence of the woman associated with it.

The mythological element in Iphigenie, however, gives the image of the moon, or the figure of the goddess, in the play a very different character from the motif of the lyric poetry. The image is used no less lyrically, but it is used within a dramatic as well as a strictly mythological context. Thus it is that Iphigenie's two addresses to Artemis, or Diana, are in the form of a prayer; moreover, these prayers cannot, like the prayer in Wanderers Nachtlied I, or the appeal to the moon in



An den Mond, be taken from their dramatic context and treated as independent lyric poems.

This is particularly true of Iphigenie's second appeal to the Goddess in Act III; but her prayer at the end of Act I, the lyrical character of which is marked by the change of rhythm, has an equally direct bearing on the action of the play. The moon is not, as in the lyric poetry, here seen as the natural counterpart to, or symbol of, the feelings of the poet or the speaker; there is no metaphorical relationship between the moon and ideas or emotions, between "image" and "meaning". The metaphorical relationship is reduced to a less subjective and more literal relationship between priestess and goddess:

Du hast Wolken, gnädige Retterin,  
Einschüllen unschuldig Verfolgte,  
Und auf Winden dem ehrnen Geschick sie  
Aus den Armen, über das Meer,  
Über der Erde weiteste Strecken,  
Und wohin es dir gut dünkt, zu tragen.  
Weiss bist du und siehest das Künftige;  
Nicht vorüber ist dir das Vergangene,  
Und dein Blick ruht über den Deinen,  
Wie dein Licht, das Leben der Mächte,  
Über der Erde ruhet und waltet.

(vv. 538-548).

The clouds here clearly refer to Iphigenie's rescue from the altar at Aulis, described in I,3; this association of the moon with clouds has nothing in common with the dramatic effects of the same phenomenon in



Werther or in Ossian's poems, nor with the play of light between the moon and mist or cloud which had fascinated Goethe during the second Schweizer Reise -- it refers only to the action of the drama. Goethe was later to draw on his meteorological observations for his cloud-symbolism, and was to use this in association with the moon in later works<sup>3</sup>, but there is again no connexion between this symbolism and the image of Iphigenie.

The second part of this passage contains a theme already used in connexion with the image of the moon in the earlier An Luna, the notion of the omniscient, all-seeing moon; and in the association of past and future being perceived under the light of the moon there is a hint, in strictly mythological terms, of the notion expressed in Um Mitternacht, of the fusion of past, present and future under the moon's influence<sup>4</sup>. The simile in the last three lines introduces the image of the moon itself, as distinct from its personification in the goddess, for the first time; as in An den Mond, there is an evocation of the light of the moon as the gaze of a woman which spreads peace over the earth:

Und dein Blick ruht über den Deinen,  
Wie dein Licht, das Leben der Nächte,  
Über der Erde ruhet und waltet.

The image, however, shows a difference from that of An



den Mond; these last three lines were added in Italy, and the moon is no longer associated with twilight or "Nebelglanz" as in the pre-Italian lyrics. It is the clear, bright moon of the Italian landscape, where the moon "leuchtet wie eine zweite Sonne", and turns the night to day.

The second direct reference to the moon in Iphigenie also consists of a plea in prayer form, and again it is the mythological association that is invoked. The metaphorical implication lies in the analogy between the situation of the play and the relationship between Apollo and Diana, who are appealed to as brother and sister. Iphigenie, as sister, appeals to the moon, herself a sister, to restore her brother<sup>5</sup>. The apparent polarities of sun and moon are seen here as being in harmony, as two opposite principles which are not necessarily in conflict, and in which Iphigenie sees the analogy to her own situation:

Geschwister, die ihr an dem weiten Himmel  
 Das schöne Licht bei Tag und Nacht herauf  
 Den Menschen bringet, und den Abgeschiednen  
 Nicht leuchten dürft, rettet uns Geschwister!  
 (vv. 1317-20)

There is an element of desperation in Iphigenie's plea. Her faith in the essential goodness of the gods, the harmony of the mythological pattern, is threatened.



and with it the whole ethos of Iphigenie's existence. She appeals to the cosmic order to reaffirm her faith, and even in this speech there is an element of doubt which finds its fullest expression in the Parzenlied at the end of the fourth act. Here she is still forcing herself, as it were, to believe in a harmonious order, and it is in the relationship of sun and moon that she seeks this order:

Du liebst, Diana, deinen holden Bruder  
 Vor allem, was dir Erd und Himmel bietet,  
 Und wendest dein jungfräulich Angesicht  
 Nach seinem ew'gen Lichte sehnend still ... 6.

This passage is interesting, not so much in its use of the image of the moon -- the mythological personification excludes any truly original associative element, and the metaphors "dein jungfräulich Angesicht" and "seinen ew'gen Lichte" are not strikingly original images -- as in the fact that this is the first use Goethe makes of sun and moon as images of opposition or polarity. In his previous works the moon, whether it had appeared as an element in the nocturnal landscape or as a lyrical motif, had been used independently of the sun, as a self-sufficient image. Here it is used, essentially, in relation to the sun, in terms of opposition, as sister to a brother, as one of two elements which, apparently



hostile, are brought (in the mind of Iphigenie, at least) into harmony with each other. The polarity of sun and moon is a theme which from now on recurs in Goethe's work; it will be found in Tasso to represent the relationship of Tasso and Antonio; in the West-östliche Divan to symbolise that of Haten and Suleika; and it can be traced in the late lyrics, and finally in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht in a very much wider application<sup>7</sup>.

Whereas in Iphigenie nature plays little part in the play, and is almost excluded from the scene -- apart from the grove of the goddess, the presence of the sea in the back-ground is the only natural element which plays any rôle in this essentially human drama -- in Tasso, on the other hand, the Duke's park at Ferrara forms the scene for much of the action. This, it is true, is an enclosed, stylised nature very different from the natural scenery of Weimar and the early Weimar lyrics, and is clearly a result of the Italian journey; but the imagery used in the language of the play, and particularly that of the poet Tasso, is taken largely from this natural setting, from the formal park or garden -- images like the fountain, the gardner, flower-beds and the silkworm. What is further interesting in many of the images used by Tasso in the play is that he not only chooses them



in order to express ideas and feelings metaphorically, but frequently illustrates by means of his images the whole problem -- and at times even the process -- of creative activity, and its relation to human existence. Professor Wilkinson has pointed out how Goethe shows us in Tasso the creative artist at work, so to speak, on the stage<sup>8</sup>; and not only does Tasso create his poetic visions as he speaks, but he also elaborates his similes into metaphors of poetic creation -- as in the image of the silkworm in V. 2<sup>9</sup>.

Many of the images in which Tasso expresses his own situation, his fate as a poet vis-à-vis the world of practical and rational values, have an element in common. In his insecurity, Tasso sees his own existence as "Schein", as illusory, unreal and even parasitic; and though he insists on the validity of his creative vision in itself, it is when he is caught up in the tension between the world of Antonio and his own creative world that doubts concerning the validity of and justification for his own existence arise. The images he uses to express this questioning and introverted doubt are, appropriately and naturally, images of illusion and reflection. Thus he sees himself reflected in a pool, and within the "Widerschein" his vision of Elysium (vv. 532-36); and his feelings in the presence of Antonio are



similarly expressed in an image of reflection:

Doch ach! je mehr ich horchte, mehr und mehr  
Versank ich vor mir selbst, ich fürchtete,  
Wie Echo an den Felsen zu verschwinden,  
Ein Widerhall, ein Nichts, mich zu verlieren.  
(vv. 797-800)

When Tasso is at his lowest ebb, when his illusions are rudely shattered and his hysteria has led to imprisonment, the words he uses are similarly those of deception and delusion:

Bist du aus einem Traum erwacht, und hat  
Der schöne Trug auf einmal dich verlassen?  
(vv. 2189-90)

-- and in the same speech the image is of night which has returned, and the light of day deprived:

Es geht die Sonne mir der schönsten Gunst  
Auf einmal unter; seinen holden Blick  
Entziehet mir der Fürst und läßt mich hier  
Auf düstern, schmalen Pfad verloren stehn.  
Das häßliche zweideutige Geflügel,  
Das leidige Gefolg der alten Nacht,  
Es schwärzt hervor und schwirrt mir um das Haupt.  
(vv. 2231-7)

The associations which Tasso finds, then, in his moments of pathological insecurity -- the last three lines of this passage are nightmarish in their imagery -- are those of night, dream, reflection, Schein. When this introverted or unstable mood is absent, however, when a new confidence is instilled into him, itself based on



illusion, in his interview with the Princess, his new impulse to action rather than words, the "Drang zur Tat"<sup>10</sup>, is expressed in the very opposite images of sunlight and a new dawn, of "Glanz" and "goldnen Strahlen":

Du hast mich oft, o Göttliche, geduldet,  
Und wie die Sonne, trocknete dein Blick  
Den Tau von meinen Augenlidern ab...  
(vv. 1082-4)

-- and again:

... Es erhebt  
Die Sonne sich des neuen Lebenstages,      11  
Der mit dem vorigen sich nicht vergleicht  
(vv. 1129-31)

and similarly, Tasso sees his disgrace in terms of the image of the setting sun (cf. above, vv. 2231-32).

Although the sun (and moon) images in the play are by no means restricted to Tasso alone<sup>12</sup>, we can see that the extremes to which his temperament drives him, the extreme of doubt and insecurity on the one hand, and of the impulsive will to prove himself at home in the world of action and practical values on the other, are expressed respectively in images of reflection, dream, and echo, and of sun, brightness, and dawn. And in the fourth act, when Tasso's self-confidence is at its lowest, when the duality of his personality has led him to doubt his very existence, the imagery he uses juxtaposes these same



oppositions, the inner, illusory, reflected world of the imagination and the clear light of conscious reason:

Wohl hast du recht, ich bin nicht mehr ich selbst,  
Und bin's doch noch so gut, als wie ich's war.  
Es scheint ein Rätsel, und doch ist es keins.

The "Rätsel" is expressed in terms of the moon by day<sup>13</sup>,

Der stille Mond, der dich bei Nacht erfreut,  
Dein Auge, dein Gemüt mit seinem Schein  
Unwiderstehlich lockt, er schwebt an Tage  
Ein unbedeutend blasses Wölkenchen hin.  
Ich bin vom Glanz des Tages überschienen,  
Ihr kennet mich, ich kenne mich nicht mehr.  
(vv. 2254-62)

This classical simile, a formal comparison which, like a Virgilian simile, is presented as a full parallel to the concept it expresses, has the same economy and effect as most of the carefully constructed and elaborated similes in the play. The image here, of the moon by night and the moon by day, does not only express Tasso's present situation in the dramatic context, out of favour and in disgrace, overshadowed -- or rather outshone -- by the favourite Antonio, nor is it simply a comparison of Tasso, the introvert, with the virile energy of Antonio. It is a simile of Tasso's whole existence as a poet -- as it appears to his mind in the present situation<sup>14</sup>; his earlier illusion, that the man of words could be the equal of the man of action, that



"gleiches Streben Held und Dichter bindet", is shattered, and he can now only complain bitterly that the Duke has never exchanged a word with him on affairs of state. The poet is here relegated to his own element, night, where his "Schein", his borrowed illusory light, is unchallenged by the self-generating light of the sun. The point around which the play turns, Tasso's hysterical insecurity in the face of the demands of social reality and practical reason, the fate of the poet, is contained in this image: "Dieses poetische, mondhafte Dasein -- ein Echo, ein Widerhall, ein Nichts -- verliert Fülle und Anziehungskraft, Glanz und Umriss, verblaßt zum 'unbedeutenden' Wölkchen, wenn das Tagesgestirn, die volle Wirklichkeit des Daseins, beherrschend den Raum der Welt erfüllt" <sup>15</sup>.

The image of the moon is used in a second context in Tasso, in a simile which, like the previous one, is fitted precisely to the situation it describes, but which lacks the wide implications of the first. Leonore Sanvitale, describing the curiously ambivalent love which the Princess feels towards Tasso, expresses its pale and cool quality, its lack of passion or depth, and with this the whole shadow-like character of her rival, in terms of moonlight:



Denn ihre Neigung zu dem werten Manne  
 Ist ihren andern Leidenschaften gleich.  
 Sie leuchten, wie der stille Schein des Mondes  
 Dem Wanderer spärlich auf dem Pfad zu Nacht;  
 Sie wärmen nicht und gießen keine Lust  
 Noch Lebensfreud' umher...

(vv. 1954-59)

Once again it is the pale light of the moon that is evoked, a negative image expressing the cool, intellectualised sphere of the mind, light without heat, here contrasted implicitly with the active and vital power of the sun to describe the emotions of the "Schülerin des Plato". This is indeed a very different use of the image of the moon from that of the early Weimar lyrics; and yet in spite of the negative context here, it is no accident that the moon should be associated with a woman whose coolness and aloofness is very akin to that of the woman who had been for Goethe the counterpart of the moon, Charlotte von Stein. The positive effect of moonlight in which Goethe had previously expressed his debt to the "Madonna" is lost, and there remains only its obverse: "Dem Schönen, wie die Prinzessin es sieht und in ihrem Wesen verwirklicht, signet noch eine zwar reizvolle, aber gleichsam schutzbedürftige, geistige Blässe, das Mondlichthafte ... Es ist der Geist der Frau von Stein, der bis an die Schwelle Italiens, aber noch nicht in die südlichen Zonen führt" <sup>16</sup>.

The moon-imagery in Tasso, then, does have its



roots in the imagery and experience of the early Weimar years, in spite of the negative use which it seems to have in the play. In a diary entry in January 1779 Goethe comments on his dual rôle in Weimar, as minister of state and as creative artist:

Der Druck der Geschäfte ist sehr schön der Seele, wenn sie entladen ist spielt sie freyer und genießt des Lebens. Elender ist nichts als der behagliche Mensch ohne Arbeit, das schönste der Gaben wird ihm eckel. (WA.III.1.77).

The division of his energies between affairs of state by day, and his devotion to his personal, inner life in the evening and at night, is a feature of Goethe's life in the years 1775-86; and though it would be absurd to see such a sharp distinction of routine and relaxation into daytime and night-time in Weimar, it is certainly true that in Weimar the inner life of the poet manifested itself largely in the nocturnal lyrics, the moonlit nights and in moods like that of the last stanza of An den Mond. Or, as Goethe wrote to Charlotte in 1777:

Tauche mich in die Sonne früh,  
Bad ab im Monde des Tages Müh ...

Just as there can be no doubt that the Tasso-Antonio conflict, the tension between the demands of practical life and the demands of the creative mind, and the desire



to combine the two apparent opposites into one whole, is a problem which was keenly felt by Goethe in his more active years of service in Weimar, so it seems that some of the images through which he expresses this conflict in the drama had their origin in that period. Tasso, who complains bitterly that he is never consulted by the Duke on affairs of state, who feels a paralysing inadequacy in the presence of Antonio, sees his existence as a "moonlight" one, devoted to night and solitude, which risks paling into insignificance when it is out of its own introverted element. It is here as if Goethe was turning away from his own nocturnal existence in Weimar, as if the image of moonlight, which had expressed such a positive and liberating effect in Jägers Abendlied and An den Mond, was now coming to represent for him an all too one-sided existence -- and an existence, moreover, which he found increasingly difficult to justify and maintain in the face of its opposite, the "sunlight" existence of Antonio. In Italy, the previous associations of moonlight disappear from Goethe's work, and the moon does not regain its full status or its full lyrical significance as an image until the late lyrics. The moon is by no means ignored during the Italienische Reise, -- but it has, as Goethe puts it, "ein ganz anderes Geschäft als anderer Orten".



So not only does Leonore Sanvitale's simile in III, 3. recall the figure and attributes of Charlotte von Stein; Tasso's own moon-image has wider implications which can only be seen fully in the perspective, firstly, of the imagery within the play itself, of illusion and reflection, and secondly, in the perspective of the experience and imagery of the whole early Weimar period<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, in spite of these antecedents, the image of the moon in both Tasso and Iphigenie still marks something of a break in the development of the image as we have traced it through the works up to the Italienische Reise.

The most distinct difference between the imagery used in the dramas and that of the lyric poetry is, of course, that in the former it must be seen in its dramatic, rather than in its lyrical context. This does not mean that the language, or the metaphors, of the dramas is necessarily any less "poetic" than that of the lyric poems; but it does exclude the sometimes apparently arbitrary and wide-ranging free-play of association around the image which we find in the lyrics. The image is strictly in the service of the dramatic action -- thus in Iphigenie the association of clouds with the moon is not related to the same association frequently found in the lyrics, but is a part of Iphigenie's plea for human-



ity towards the "unschuldig Verfolgte" who have been delivered into her hands as priestess. Moreover, the moon in Iphigenie is represented in almost exclusively mythological terms, as Artemis or Diana, sister to Apollo; the moon as a natural motif is almost wholly obscured behind its personification, even when those features of the moon common to the lyrics, "dein Blick", "dein Licht", "dein jungfräulich Angesicht" are evoked.

In Tasso there are no mythological associations, and yet the moon-imagery here is as distinct from the lyric poetry as that of Iphigenie; and this is not so much a result of the content or associative power of the images as of their form. The two similes in which the moon features are, like many of the play's figures, consciously and deliberately contrived analogies<sup>18</sup>. It is not the associative power of the moon that is evoked in an irrational but compelling way, as the notions of regeneration, healing, peace and stable order are suggested by the light of the moon in the early Weimar lyrics and the opening monologue of Urfaust; in each case in Tasso, the simile of the moon is used to illustrate in the most effective way possible a statement about a particular aspect of character or situation which is of importance to the action of the play itself<sup>19</sup>. In the one, it expresses the nature of the Princess's feelings towards Tasso, as



it is seen through the eyes of Leonore Sanvitale, and is moreover introduced by the formal "wie" of the classical simile; in the other, the simile is wider and deeper in its implications, but it is no less an expression of Tasso's situation as he sees it at the time, that is, in Act IV, scene 2 of the play.

In both these cases, the simile is potentially irrelevant, even dispensable; an explanation in conceptual terms would have said as much as the perceptual image for the purposes of the dramatic action, whereas the image in a lyric poem cannot possibly be replaced or removed without the poem itself being destroyed. And yet the image is more than simply a gratuitous pictorial illustration of a psychological situation; for the image of the moon in IV, 2. is one of a series of images which, as we have seen, go to make up the complex expression of Tasso's character and situation as a poet: the images of reflection and "Schein", of which that of the moon is the most significant, particularly when it is used explicitly in contrast to its polarity, the sun<sup>20</sup>.



## 2. Italy

"Goethe wird auch in Italien, wie in den Weimarer Jahren vorher und später, vom Gesicht der Welt im milden Glanz des Mondlichts überwältigt..." <sup>21</sup>. The effects of moonlight on the landscape, the coasts and the architecture of Italy are not only described fully in the diaries, letters and reports of the Italienische Reise; it was in Italy that Goethe applied himself to drawing and sketching even more than in the years 1775-77 in Weimar. And just as the Weimar drawings were at times like illustrations of his lyric poetry, so we find in the drawings of the Italian journey the graphic illustration of the impressions of the moonlit landscape to be found in his descriptions.

The clearest impression that is gained from the descriptions of the Italian night is that Goethe has left behind the "Dämmerung" and half-light with which the moon had been associated in the North, and which had played an important part in his lyric poetry as well as in his early ideas on "Schönheit" and "Wahrheit". It is the very clarity of the moonlight which he finds attractive in the South, the plastic quality of the landscape under the full moon and its effect, not on his own mood



or his inner "Gefild", but on the objects and buildings of the Italian scene. What attracts him now is not the "Nebelglanz" of the Weimar lyrics, and even less the "Silberschauer" of the earlier moon-lyrics, but "die Reinheit der Conture, die Weichheit des Ganzen, das Auseinanderweichen der Töne, die Harmonie von Himmel, Meer und Erde" (WA.I.31.91); or, as he puts it in the seventh Roman Elegy:

Sternhell glänzet die Nacht, sie klingt von weichen  
Gesängen,  
Und mir leuchtet der Mond heller als nordischer Tag...

In Sicily, Goethe describes the "Ruhe und Anmuth" <sup>22</sup> of the clear moonlit night, and later records his impressions of the gondoliers of Venice singing by moonlight <sup>23</sup>. In Naples he describes a peculiar effect of moonlight on spatial perspectives:

Aber weder zu erzählen noch zu beschreiben ist die Herrlichkeit einer Vollmondnacht, wie wir sie genossen, durch die Straßen über die Plätze wandelnd, auf der Chiaja, dem unermesslichen Spaziergang, sodann am Meeresufer hin und wider. Es übernimmt einen wirklich das Gefühl der Unendlichkeit des Raums ... (5th March, 1787; WA.I.31.26).

And on the 2nd June:

... Je mehr die Nacht wuchs, desto mehr schien die Gegend an Klarheit zu



gewinnen; der Mond leuchtete wie eine zweite Sonne... (WA.I.31.275)

In Rome, Goethe is delighted by the crowds in the streets during the bright nights of the full moon and by the outline of St. Peter's by moonlight:

Es war ein schöner klarer Himmel und der Mond voll, dadurch ward die Erleuchtung sanfter, und es sah ganz aus wie ein Mähren. Die schöne Form der Kirche und der Kuppel gleichsam in einem feurigen Aufriß zu sehen, ist ein großer und reizender Anblick ... (30th June, 1787; WA.I.32.9).

Again on 30th July there is the entry:

... Die Mondnächte sind ganz unglaublich schön; der Aufgang, eh' sich der Mond durch die Dünste heraufgearbeitet hat, ganz gelb und warm, come il sole d'Inghilterra (!), die übrige Nacht klar und freundlich... (WA.I.32.40).

And appropriately enough, Goethe takes leave of Rome in the nostalgic and elegiac mood of a magical "Vollmondnacht" and leaves one of the most memorable descriptions of the whole Italienische Reise:

Auf eine besonders feierliche Weise sollte jedoch mein Abschied aus Rom vorbereitet werden; drei Nächte vorher stand der volle Mond am klarsten Himmel, und ein Zauber, der sich dadurch über die ungeheure Stadt verbreitet, so oft empfunden, ward nun auf's eindringlichste fühlbar. Die großen Lichtmassen, klar,



wie von einem milden Tag beleuchtet, mit ihren Gegensätzen von tiefen Schatten, durch Reflexe manchmal erhellt, zur Ahnung des Einzelnen, setzen uns in einen Zustand wie von einer andern einfachern größern Welt.

Nach zerstreuten, mitunter peinlich zugebrachten Tagen, macht' ich den Umgang mit wenigen Freunden einmal ganz allein. Nachdem ich den langen Corso, wohl zum letztenmal, durchwandert hatte, bestieg ich das Capitol, das wie ein Feenpalast in der Wüste dastand. Die Statue Marc Aurels rief den Commandeur in Don Juan zur Erinnerung, und gab dem Wanderer zu verstehen, daß er etwas Ungewöhnliches unternahme. Dessenungeachtet ging ich die hintere Treppe hinab. Ganz finster, finstern Schatten werfend, stand mir der Triumphbogen des Septimius Severus entgegen; in der Einsamkeit der Via Sacra erschienen die sonst so bekannten Gegenstände fremdartig und geisterhaft. Als ich aber den erhabenen Resten des Coliseums mich näherte und in dessen verschlossenes Innere durch's Gitter hineinsah, darf ich nicht läugnen, daß mich ein Schauer überfiel und meine Rückkehr beschleunigte.

Alles Massenhafte macht einen eignen Eindruck zugleich als erhaben und fasslich, und in solchen Umgängen zog ich gleichsam ein unübersehbares Summa Summarum meines ganzen Aufenthaltes. Dieses in aufgeregter Seele tief und groß empfunden, erregte eine Stimmung, die ich heroisch-elegisch nennen darf, woraus sich in poetischer Form eine Elegie zusammenbilden wollte.

Und wie sollte mir gerade in solchen Augenblicken Ovids Elegie nicht in's Gedächtnis zurückkehren, der, auch verbannt, in einer Mondnacht Rom verlassen sollte. Cum repeto noctem! seine Rück-  
erinnerung, weit hinten am schwarzen Meere, im trauer- und jammervollen Zustande, kam mir nicht aus dem Sinn, ich wiederholte das Gedicht, das mir theilweise genau in Gedächtnis hervorstieg, aber mich wirklich an eigner Production irre werden ließ und hinderte; die auch, später unternommen,



niemals zu Stande kommen konnte. (WA.I.32.336-7)

We can only regret the failure of the elegy; this passage, the Summa Summarum of his Italian experience, shows not only how susceptible Goethe was to the atmosphere and "Anmuth" of the clear Italian night, but also how both perception and imagination were keenly stimulated by the effects of Southern moonlight. He had previously described the sensation of the "Unendlichkeit des Raums" which overcame him when walking in the moonlight through Palermo; in Venice, he had experienced "das Geistermäßige" of the moonlit scene; and here in Rome his imagination plays freely on the mystery of the "Ungewöhnliche", the "fremdartig und geisterhaft" effects of statues and monuments in full moonlight. There is none of the demonic and claustrophobic atmosphere of Erlkönig or of the Walpurgisnacht; this landscape has been left behind in the "Nebel des traurigen Nordens". The Magie of this scene has more in common with parts of two very much later works -- the quietly uncanny transparency of the scene on ice by moonlight in Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren, or the ghostly confusion of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, where the light of the moon reigns over all, creating confusion between real and unreal and giving free rein to the imagination<sup>25</sup>. All three scenes have a certain uncanny, if not sinister and threatening at-



mosphere; but in none of them is this latent danger exploited so dramatically or drastically as in the Weimar ballad. Peace of mind and harmony are re-established, here by elegiac reflection and the delight in the pure forms of architecture by moonlight, in the Wanderjahre by explanation and understanding, and in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht by the triumphant operatic finale of the Meerfest, in the evolution of form out of chaos.

In this same passage describing his last night in Rome, Goethe mentions another of the principal experiences of the Italian moon-landscapes; he notes the way in which moonlight reduces the severe lines of classical architecture to an interplay of light and shade, how the great mass of the buildings is thrown into sharper relief, "zur Ahnung des Einzelnen", and how the effect of this phenomenon, "erhaben und faßlich zugleich", gives the impression "wie von einer andern, einfacheren, grössern Welt", the world of classical antiquity, of Ovid and of "der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten". For this description of statues and monuments by moonlight, the evocation of the figures of Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus and Ovid, recalls nothing so much as the lines from Faust which were almost certainly written in Italy; the exhausted and disillusioned Faust seeks peace and regeneration in nature, where it seems that his earlier, desperate appeal to the



moon for release and rejuvenation in the opening monologue has been answered, at least temporarily:

Und steigt vor meinem Blick der reine Mond  
Besänftigend herüber: schweben mir  
Von Felsenwänden, aus dem feuchten Busch,  
Der Verwelt silberne Gestalten auf,  
Und lindern der Betrachtung strenge Lust ...  
(vv. 3235-39).

The scene is certainly a different one from the moonlight scene in Rome -- here it is a natural landscape, there a setting of classical architecture. The passage has given rise to opposing views -- whether the landscape and spirits belong to earlier associations of spirits and departed souls in the light of the Ossianic moon, whether it is akin to the "Bergeshöhl" and "Geister" of the Urfaust monologue<sup>26</sup>, or whether it is a more classical association -- that of the concluding passage of the Italienische Reise<sup>27</sup>. It seems, in fact, to be a curious mixture; the "Felsenwänden" and "feuchten Busch" are features of early, if not Ossianic landscapes<sup>28</sup>; the association of spirits and moonlight was one of the most common associations of Goethe's Ossianic poetry, and of Ossian itself. Yet the association of elemental spirits and moonlight is not restricted to the works of the Strasbourg and Frankfurt years, by any means -- it is a motif which, in various forms, runs through much of Goethe's work, in the early Weimar lyric Um Mitternacht, wenn die



Menschen erst schlafen, in Erlkönig, in the opening scenes of Faust II and in the late lyric Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen, as well as the whole pre-classical spirit-world of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht.

There would appear to be no compelling reason, then, why this passage should be particularly associated with the earlier Ossianic landscape; indeed, some important factors speak against it. Formally, the lines belong clearly to the years around the Italienische Reise; the iambic rhythms of the Wald und Höhle scene (of this part of it, at least), present a quiet contrast to the restless doggerel of the rest of the first part of Faust, and which takes over in this scene as soon as Mephisto makes his entry. They are the rhythms of Iphigenie and Tasso. Moreover, there is none of the dynamic imagery of Ossian/Werther in this passage; and the tortured, desperate appeal of Urfaust to his "trübseeliger Freund" contrasts strongly with the "reine Mond" and the calm association of moonlight: "besänftigend" and "lindernd". Finally, the notion of "der Betrachtung strange Lust" is one which belongs firmly to the later Goethe of the Roman Elegies, where he celebrates "den stillen Genuß reiner Betrachtung"<sup>29</sup>.

Even if one favours the view that the passage has no Ossianic connexions, however, and sees it purely in terms of the classical influence, it is still not clear



exactly what the reference of "der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten" is -- whether they are the spirits of classical writers or heroes evoked in the silver moonlight, as they were on Goethe's last walk through Rome, or whether they are, in a more literal sense, as Fritz Strich has suggested, "die griechischen, in Marmor glänzenden Götter" <sup>30</sup>.

More interesting is the fact that this passage from the middle of the first part of Faust must be seen in the perspective of the three appeals of Faust for rebirth and regeneration; as we have seen, his appeal to the moon in the opening monologue remains unanswered, at least directly -- the Erdgeist offers him no immediate release from his "Wissensqualm", no opportunity to bathe himself to health as he had wished to do in the light of the Ossianic moon. Here, once again by moonlight, he is offered transient peace and relaxation from "der Betrachtung strange Lust", and from his sensual excesses, a chance to recuperate in the arms of nature; and once again, the moon is associated with the idea of rebirth and regeneration -- but Faust's peace is precarious. Soon afterwards, he is to be rudely interrupted and urged on to more frenzied pursuit of pleasure by his "Gefährte", who still represents the necessary counterpart to Faust's lofty ambitions. It is not until the opening scene of



the second part, the Elfenzene, that Faust is to find the healing, restoring oblivion for which he begged in the opening monologue; and here again, the image of the moon is an important element in the nocturnal "Heilschlaf" bestowed on Faust by the spirits<sup>31</sup>.

It is not only the imagination, however, but also the perception, that is sharpened in the Italian moonlight. Goethe begins to note his impressions of the effects of light between the moon and clouds with the same quasi-scientific interest that he had shown during the second Schweizer Reise -- the beginnings of an interest in meteorological phenomena which was later to absorb much of his attention, and to find its way into the symbolic motifs of his later works<sup>32</sup>. In Verona he notes:

Von der Witterung diese Tage her melde ich Folgenden. Die Nacht vom neunten auf den zehnten [September] war abwechselnd hell und bedeckt, der Mond behielt immer einen Schein um sich. Morgens gegen fünf Uhr überzog sich der ganze Himmel mit grauen, nicht schweren Wolken, die mit dem wachsenden Tage verschwanden (WA.I.30.52-3);

and again from Venice on 1st October:

Heute Abend war herrlicher Mondschein. Ein Gewitter kam übers Meer von Südost, also von den dalmatischen Gebürgen, wetterleuchtete, zog am Mond vorbei zertheilte sich und ging nach



den Thyroler Gebirg ... Einige Striche  
habe ich auf grau Papier gemacht von  
dieses Abends Erscheinung auf dem  
Wasser ... (WA.III.1.254)

33.

And there is even evidence of a closer astronomical  
interest in the moon, an early indication of an interest  
which was to develop later<sup>34</sup>.

... Neumond ist vorbei, und neben  
der zarten Mondichel konnte ich die ganze  
dunkle Scheibe fast mit bloßen Augen,  
durch's Perspektiv ganz deutlich sehn ...  
(Rome, 19th February, 1787; WA.I.30.275)

These are, however, only the beginnings of an  
interest which was not to develop fully for some time.  
What interested Goethe more than these meteorological  
or astronomical phenomena was the effect of the moonlight  
on the classical architecture which is now replacing  
the barbarous Northern Gothic in his affection and esteem.  
Already on the Brenner he had noted how the half-light  
of dusk or moonlight picked out the masses of the natural  
scenery and obscured detail, throwing contours and shapes  
into bolder relief:

Nun wurde es dunkler und dunkler, das  
Einzelne verlor sich, die Massen wurden inner  
größer und herrlicher, endlich da sich  
alles nur wie ein tiefes geheimes Bild vor  
mir bewegte, sah ich auf einmal wieder  
die hohen Schneegipfel vom Mond beleuchtet...  
(8th September, 1786; WA.I.30.18).





Fig.6. Villa im Mondschein.



Fig.7. Villa im Mondschein.



And on 11th September he notes how "der Mond ... beleuchtete ungeheuerere Gegenstände" (WA.I.30.32).

In Rome, it is the same effect on buildings that draws his attention:

... Von der Schönheit, im vollen  
Mondschein Rom zu durchgehen, hat man,  
ohne es gesehen zu haben, keinen Begriff.  
Alles Einzelne wird von den großen  
Massen des Lichts und Schattens ver-  
schlungen, und nur die größten all-  
gemeinsten Bilder stellen sich dar ...  
(WA.I.30.265);

In Frascati, he notes the harmony and symmetry of the clean lines of villas by moonlight:

Besonders ist die Fülle der Mond-  
scheinbilder über alle Begriffe, wo das  
einzelne Unterhaltende, vielleicht störend  
zu Nennende durchaus zurücktritt und  
nur die großen Massen von Licht und  
Schatten ungeheuer anmuthige, symmetrisch  
harmonische Riesenkörper dem Auge ent-  
gegentreten. (WA.I.32.97)

Years before, Goethe had noted a similar effect of moonlight on architecture in Strasbourg<sup>35</sup>; the Minster, seen by daylight, offers a confused mass of details which detract from the structural unity and proportion of the building. Only when the imagination can "abstract" from the profuse detail is it possible to see the relation of the Gothic decoration, "der vielfach überladenen, verworrenen Zieraten", to the structure as a whole. And



it is precisely by half-light or moonlight that it is possible to do this:

Nähern wir uns [der Fassade] in der Dämmerung, bei Mondschein, bei sternheller Nacht, wo die Theile mehr oder weniger undeutlich werden und zuletzt verschwinden, so sehen wir nur eine kolossale Wand, deren Höhe zur Breite ein wohlthätiges Verhältniss hat.  
(WA.I.27.270-71).

-- It is as a result of this natural "Abstraktion" from detail in moonlight and twilight that it is possible for the observer to grasp "das richtige Verhältniss der grösseren Abtheilungen, die so sinnige als reiche Verzierung bis ins Kleinste" of the Gothic style.

In Italy, where Goethe's thoughts were far enough from the Strasbourg Minster, it was still the harmony and symmetry of the architecture, which did not even need such a mental "Abstraktion" to show up its proportions as the Gothic Minster did, that he saw enhanced and emphasised by the effect of moonlight. And not only does he describe the way in which moonlight shows up the symmetry of Italian architecture in his reports from Italy; his drawings of buildings by moonlight illustrate the same effects. The blurred, evocative Stimmungsbilder of the Weimar moon-drawings give way to a more plastic representation of the clear outlines



of buildings, and to the effects of light and shade; not the vague clair-obscur of the earlier sketches, but the balance between light and dark which shows up proportion and symmetry<sup>36</sup>. In particular, the drawings of villas in Frascati from November 1786, to which Goethe refers the following year in his report<sup>37</sup>, show the same "von allen Kleinigkeiten befreite Körperhaftigkeit"<sup>38</sup> of architecture by moonlight which Goethe describes in his writings.

This phenomenon of light and shade by moonlight has also found its way into the creative works; the view of the town by moonlight in Hermann und Dorothea is remarkably similar to the description of Rome in the light of the moon, where "die großen Lichtmassen, klar, wie von einem milden Tage beleuchtet, mit ihren Gegensätzen von tiefen Schatten, durch Reflexe manchmal erhellt", characterize the scene:

Horrrlich glänzte der Mond, der volle, vom Himmel  
herunter;  
Nacht wars, völlig bedeckt das letzte Schimmer der  
Sonne.  
Und so lagen vor ihnen in Massen gegeneinander,  
Lichter, hell wie der Tag, und Schatten dunkler  
Nächte ...  
(WA.I.50.254).

Neither the drawings nor the descriptions of moonlight during the Italienische Reise, however, are exhausted by observations of the effects of light and shade



on buildings and landscapes. Even more frequent than these are the references to the moon reflected in water -- a motif which has already featured in Goethe's prose-writings and lyrics with significant frequency, and which came to have more than simply literal significance in the poems An den Mond and Der Fischer. The reports and drawings of the Italienische Reise give no indication of any figurative or symbolic significance which might be attached to the phenomenon -- even to the extent that the moon and water might represent in general terms the polarities of order and flux, permanence and transience. Yet Goethe's constant interest in the reflected light of sun and moon in water clearly indicates his growing interest in entoptic images, the Spiegelung and Wiederholte Spiegelungen which are an important part of his symbolic, as well as of his scientific thinking. And when, much later, Goethe came to write the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, there is little doubt that for one of the central features of the Meerfest scene, Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers, he was drawing on his memories of this, his only experience of coastal landscape:

Da, wo Luna doppelt leuchtet ... 39

In Venice, Goethe notes the "herrliches Schauspiel" created by the effect of moonlight on the islands, and



its reflection in the Lagoon<sup>40</sup>, and on the voyage to Sicily from Naples his appreciation of the same phenomenon is marred only by his being a poor sailor:

... Nun war kein Land mehr zu sehen, der Horizont ringsum ein Wasserkreis, die Nacht hell und schöner Mondschein. Ich hatte doch dieser herrlichen Ansichten nur Augenblicke genießen können, die Seekrankheit überfiel mich bald ... (WA.I.31.82).

Two days later he has recovered sufficiently to take a more perceptive interest in the reflection of the moon:

Bei trüblichem Himmel heller Mondschein, der Widerschein auf dem Meer unendlich schön. Die Mahler, um der Wirkung willen, lassen uns oft glauben, der Widerschein der Himmelslichter im Wasser habe zunächst dem Beschauer die größte Breite, wo er die größte Energie hat. Hier aber sah man am Horizont den Widerschein am breitesten, der sich, wie eine zugespitzte Pyramide, zunächst am Schiff in blinkenden Wellen endigte. 41  
(WA.I.31.85-6)

And on 3rd April, with some relief, he is able to observe the phenomenon from terra firma:

... Der Mond ging voll hinter einem Vorgebirge herauf und schien ins Meer; und diesen Genuss, nachdem man vier Tage und Nächte auf den Wellen geschwebt! (Palermo, 3rd April, 1787; WA.I.31.92).

The drawings of the moon reflected in water are



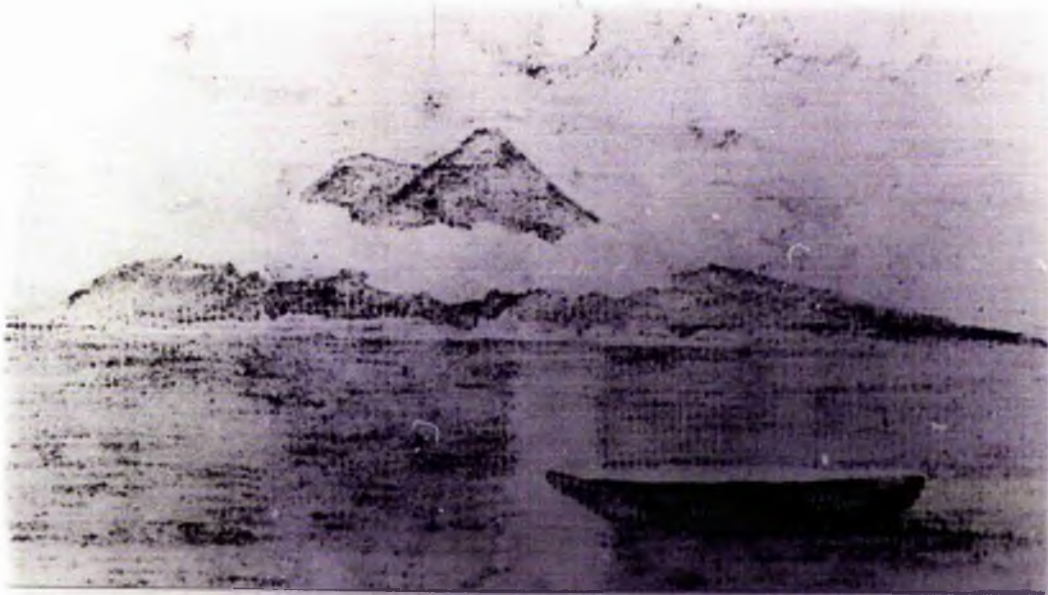


Fig.8. Kegelberg mit Wolkenkranz.



Fig.9. Italienische Küstenlandschaft bei Vollmond.



numerous; in five of them, particularly, there is evidence of keen observation<sup>42</sup>, and two of these have been attributed variously to the influence of Tischbein, Hackert or Claude<sup>43</sup>. As we have seen, Tischbein wrote to Goethe describing the same phenomenon<sup>44</sup>, and in a later essay on Wilhelm Tischbeins Idyllen. Goethe remarks:

Seltenes und Außerordentliches  
verliicht noch weniger in seiner  
Einbildungskraft. Den vollen Mond neben  
dem feuersprühenden furchtbaren Spiel  
des Vesuvs, beides im Meere sich ab-  
spiegelnd, wagt er sogar mit Feder-  
strichen nachzubilden, fließende Laven,  
wie die erstarrten, fast er gleich  
charakteristisch auf. (WA.I.49,1.311).

Goethe did not himself venture to reproduce "mit Federstrichen" such difficult compositions -- the only volcanic mountain which features in the drawings of "Mondscheine" is inactive and peaceful enough<sup>45</sup>. He did, however, devote some splendid prose descriptions to the sight of Vesuvius in activity by moonlight:

Nachts durch die Stadt spazierend,  
gelangt' ich zum Molo. Dort sah ich mit  
einem Blick den Mond, den Schein des-  
selben auf den Wolkenküssen, den sanft  
bewegten Abglanz im Meere, heller und  
lebhafter auf dem Saum der nächsten  
Welle. Und nun die Sterne des Himmels,  
die Lampen des Leuchtturms, das Feuer  
des Vesuvs, den Widerschein davon im  
Wasser, und viele einzelne Lichter aus-  
gesät über die Schiffe. (WA.I.31.268-9).



Two days later he sees "den Vollmond in seiner ganzen Herrlichkeit neben dem Sprühfeuer des Vulkans" (WA.I.31.272), and on 2nd June, 1787 he notes the same effect of moonlight on the landscape, the obscuring of detail and the brightness of the light against dark, that he had observed on architecture:

... Dies alles mit einem Blick zu übersehen und den hinter den Bergrücken hervortretenden Vollmond als die Erfüllung des wunderbarsten Bildes zu schauen, mußte wohl Erstaunen erregen. Dies alles konnte von diesem Standpunkt das Auge mit einmal fassen, und wenn es auch die einzelnen Gegenstände zu mustern nicht im Stande war, so verlor es doch niemals den Eindruck des großen Ganzen ... Je mehr die Nacht wuchs, desto mehr schien die Gegend an Klarheit zu gewinnen; der Mond leuchtet wie eine zweite Sonne; die Säulen des Rauchs, dessen Streifen und Massen durchleuchtet bis in's Einzelne deutlich, ja man glaubte mit halbweg bewaffnetem Auge die glühend ausgeworfenen Felsklumpen auf der Nacht des Kegelbergs zu unterscheiden ... (WA.I.31.275).

It was not difficult, when considering Goethe's work during the early Weimar years, to see how the image -- or, as it had become at this time, the leitmotif -- of the moon, which had occurred as frequently in the diaries, correspondence and drawings of that period as it does in the notebooks and drawings of the Italianische Reise, found its way into the lyric poetry of the period, and into Tasso, as a lyrical image, as a metaphor and



even as a symbol. There is no such direct parallel in the creative works to the moon as it appears in the writings and drawings of the Italian journey. In all the works which were written during or after the years in Italy, with the exception of Tasso, the lines from the Wald und Höhle scene of the Faust-Fragment quoted above, and to a lesser extent the lines from Hermann und Dorothea, the moon features only occasionally, and when it does it has neither the significance nor the depth of association which the image had before 1788. With the Wald und Höhle lines, moreover, the vague and diffuse moon-landscapes of the pre-Italian poetry, the association of half-light and Dämmerung with moonlight, disappear from Goethe's works in the same way as they disappear from his landscape drawings. The moon as it appears from now on is almost invariably the bright moon, the full moon, "like the English sun", an image of clarity, not of melancholy twilight or nostalgic sentiment:

Denn mir bleiben weit mehr die Nebel des traurigen  
 Nordens  
 Als ein geschäftiges Volk südlicher Flüsse verhasst.  
 (Röm. Elegie XV)

Goethe had, moreover, seen the moon in Italy more through the eyes of a landscape painter than of a lyric poet, not only in his drawings but also in his descrip-



tions of the Italian nights<sup>46</sup>. This does not mean that the image of the moon disappears altogether from the lyric poetry; on the contrary, as we shall see, it recurs in the late lyrics in a different, but no less important form. In these later works it will no longer be used purely as a lyrical Stilmittel, with a whole wealth of half-suggested associations; it will indeed have many of the associations which it had in the earlier lyrics, but it will assume more precisely symbolic significance in these poems of Goethe's old age. For the moment, however, the moon is little more than an element in the landscape; and it is not surprising that it is more in the epic or narrative works than in the lyric poems that the image is found at all<sup>47</sup>.

In the Römische Elegien, the moon is described once as "heller als nordischer Tag" (VII. Elegie), and is further used in a playful classical allusion:

Hätte Luna gesäumt, den schönen Schläfer zu küssen,  
O, so hätt ihn geschwind, neidend, Aurora geweckt. (III)

But otherwise the motif features only to set the scene for the nocturnal visits of Faustina (VI and XX). In Reineke Fuchs and Hermann und Dorothea the moon is referred to only as part of the nocturnal landscape, with the exception of the passage quoted above, and in Alexis und Dora it is used in a simile in a not very interesting



or original way:

Schöne Nachbarin, ja, so war ich gewohnt dich zu sehen,  
 Wie man die Sterne sieht, wie man den Mond sich beschaut,  
 Sich an ihnen erfreut, und in dem ruhigen Buceu  
 Nicht der entfernteste Wunsch, sie zu besitzen, sich  
 regt...  
 (WA.I.1.267).

### 3. The Moon in Eclipse

It is indeed a long time before the image of the moon reappears in Goethe's work with any significance; with the exception of the two lyrics Nähe des Geliebten and Gegenwart, all references to the image in the works written between shortly after the return from Italy and the writing of the West-östliche Divan are so incidental as to be of little interest here<sup>48</sup>. It is all the more curious that the moon should, during these two decades or more, cease to claim Goethe's attention, either as a lyrical motif or as an element of the landscape in anything like the way it had done before and during the Italienische Reise, since it reappears in the lyric poetry of his old age as a central and powerful symbol of light and hope. And whereas it was possible to trace a certain development in the uses and associations of



the image in the pre-Italian poetry to its culmination in the Weimarer Mondlied, such a preparatory development is not evident in the lyrical, dramatic or narrative works preceding the late lyrics such as Um Mitternacht or Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde. Even the image as it appears in the Divan gives little sign of this future development; it is as if Goethe suddenly returned to the motif which had been so frequent and effective in his early lyrics as suddenly as his lyrical impulse renewed itself in the years after 1814.

Clearly, it is too much to expect that we should be able to follow a strict or consistent development of a single image throughout a poet's work, more particularly in the case of a poet like Goethe, whose creative production depended so much, as he puts it, on a process of "wiederholten Pubertäten" and "temporären Verjüngungen"<sup>49</sup>, of chameleon-like transformations and the casting off of old skins. Various reasons could be suggested for the disappearance of the moon from the lyrical work, indeed from the work as a whole, during this period, of which no single one could fully account for it. However closely Frau von Stein may have been associated with the moon for the poet of the early Weimar years, it is hardly likely that the moon would be eclipsed in the poetry for such a length of time simply because



its counterpart had disappeared from Goethe's life; besides, as we have seen, Goethe had used the image of the moon frequently enough in the pre-Weimar lyrics, where there is no question of this association.

Emil Staiger, speaking of Goethe's works in general during the ten years following his return from Italy, remarks "wie sehr das eigentlich Lyrische in den neunziger Jahren zurücktrat. Goethe hatte seine Begriffe von Kunst, auch seine Begriffe von Dichtung aus der antiken Plastik und aus Raffaels Malerei gewonnen und hatte in diesem Sinn gesetzliche und vorbildliche Werke verfaßt. Das Lyrische entzieht sich Gesetzen und dem Gebot der Vorbildlichkeit"<sup>50</sup>. During the period of Goethe's preoccupation, on the one hand with classical form and expression, and with his scientific interests on the other, the lyrical element in his work recedes into the background, and returns only when he has thrown off his classical ideals -- with the West-Östliche Divan<sup>51</sup>. In these years, when the irrational lyrical impulse was in abeyance, it is hardly surprising that the moon, a lyrical motif more than anything else, an image associated with vague, twilight, half-suggested association and feeling, should also disappear at the same time and to the same extent as the purely lyrical element.

It is also probable that the very associations



which the image of the moon had had for Goethe in the pre-Italian poetry were no longer so attractive or important to the poet after his return from Italy. These associations were many and varied, as we have seen, but primarily they were those of vague, blurred contours, of elegiac melancholy, of peace and calm in which to recollect the past and obscure the present; the moon or moonlight meant escape from the present into the remembered past or into an imagined sphere of activity removed from the demands and realities of the present situation, the sphere of An den Mond, of the Urfaust monologue, or the introspective mind of Tasso. It was these feelings for which Goethe found the most telling and effective expression in the image of the moon.

With the Italienische Reise, it is no longer the dim obscurity of moonlight, or its equivalent in emotion or thought, that Goethe finds so attractive in the Italian landscape, but the clear moon which shines "wie eine zweite Sonne". He observes, not how the moon blurs the contours of scenery and architecture, but how it throws clear shapes and outlines into sharper relief in the contrast of light and shade. Moreover, it is the here and now, the present, not the past, that he celebrates<sup>52</sup> -- with the possible exception of his elegiac



farewell to Rome at the end of Die Italienische Reise. The poet whose guiding principle was "Schauen," not "Schwärmen" weaned himself from his earlier preoccupation with the ideal of Dämmerung; and it seems that in the ensuing years, Goethe had not yet found a suitable metaphorical or symbolic application for the bright moon of the Italian landscape. Not until much later does it reappear in his work, and then it is in terms of lightness and brightness, not of Dämmerung, but of "des vollen Mondes Helle"; not of "Silberschauer" and "Nebelglanz", but of light breaking through darkness, of "des Mondes volle Pracht" and of the moon of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, "leuchtend hell". Indeed, he himself indicates in a letter from Naples of 17th March, 1787 that the scenes which he experienced in the South were to provide material for later works; for the moment, he is too captivated by the immediate visual impressions offered by the Italian landscape to be able to give them any metaphorical or derived significance:

Wenn ich Worte schreiben will, so stehen mir immer Bilder vor Augen des fruchtbaren Landes, des freien Meeres, der duftigen Inseln, des rauchenden Berges, und mir fehlen die Organe, das alles darzustellen... (WA.I.31.55).

And shortly after he writes from Sicily even more explicitly, describing the "Harmonie von Himmel, Meer und Erde",



and adds:

... Wer es gesehen hat, der hat  
es auf sein ganzes Leben. Nun ...  
habe ich Hoffnung, auch dereinst im  
Norden aus meiner Seele Schattenbilder  
dieser glücklichen Wohnung hervor-  
zubringen ... Wir wollen sehn, was  
diese Königin der Inseln tun kann  
(Palermo, 3rd April, 1787; WA.I.31.91).

Meanwhile, it is the sun to which Goethe turns more frequently than the moon; "das ewige Licht", the symbol of clarity and truth which Faust cannot contemplate directly, but grasps in the "farbigen Abglanz" of the rainbow, is a more common motif in the years separating the two phases of Goethe's moon-poetry. This is not a sudden or arbitrary exchange of one image for another<sup>53</sup>, we cannot assume, as Thorau does, that Goethe rejects the moon as a symbol in favour of the sun simply because the latter is a more suitable image of clarity and truth<sup>54</sup>. The two images are not mutually exclusive in that Goethe "prefers" the one to the other; each has its own associations for the poet, and each is used within different contexts to express different ideas or associations; they are also frequently used as images or symbols of polarity, in Tasso or in the West-östliche Divan. Each has its independent validity and meaning; there is no question of attempting to establish the apparent "superiority" of the one over the other in Goethe's works.



It remains true, however, that the sun as an image of vitality, clarity and vision occurs more frequently in this section of Goethe's work than the image of the moon, which, although a pleasing and attractive element in the landscape, does not, as a metaphor, appeal to the classical poet who celebrates the present rather than the remembered past, who is concerned with permanence rather than transience. And though the moon had, in An den Mond, represented for the poet a "Bürge des Göttlichen", a symbol of order and permanence in the face of flux, it remains true that the moon was the image associated more than anything else with thoughts of the past and past experience, of "Freud und Schmerz", of "Soherz und Kus". It seems, too, that Goethe no longer feels the acute discrepancy between the "moonlight" existence of the poet and the vital energy of the man of practical wisdom as he had expressed it in Tasso. His desire for light and clarity manifests itself in his scientific interests as much as in his creative works, and in both fields he is concerned with the "Wahrnehmung der Dinge" rather than with "Empfindung":

Wär nicht das Auge sonnenhaft,  
Die Sonne könnt es nie erblicken.

-- and the drawing celebrating Goethe's triumph over



the darkness of Newtonian ignorance represents his own "sonnenhaftes Auge" penetrating the clouds and casting light and truth overall<sup>55</sup>.

The image of the moon does, however, appear in two lyric poems written during this period; in Nähe des Geliebten of 1795, and Gegenwart of 1813. In neither of these lyrics is the moon a central image, and both poems are similar in that the moon features among a series of other, related images which are enumerated in a hymn of praise -- a structural technique which finds its fullest development in the Divan poem In tausend Formen. In Nähe des Geliebten it is the now familiar motif of sun and moon reflected in water which recalls the beloved:

Ich denke dein, wenn mir der Sonne Schimmer  
Vom Meere strahlt;  
Ich denke dein, wenn sich des Mondes Flimmer  
In Quellen malt ...

These two striking images are missing from the original poem by Friederike Brun, Ich denke dein, from which Goethe takes the metre, stanza form and much of the vocabulary of his poem<sup>56</sup>. The first stanzas have only the opening line and the rhymes of the second and fourth lines in common:



Ich denke dein, wenn sich im Blütenregen  
 Der Frühling malt,  
 Und wenn des Sommers mildgereifter Segen  
 In Ähren strahlt ...

Otherwise, Goethe has replaced the anacreontic imagery of the original -- "Philomelens Klage", "wehende Zypressen", "Tempes Hain", etc. -- with images which are unmistakably his own, and nowhere more so than in the shimmering light of sun and moon shining on the sea or dancing on the surface of a spring. Although the images are visual in the first stanza, it is not a visual association that is expressed; it is in the second and third stanzas that directly sensual associations are introduced: "ich höre dich" -- in the waves and in the "stillen Haine"; "ich sehe dich" -- in the dust of the road, and the figure of the wanderer by night. In the first stanza, it is: "ich denke dein", an imaginative, not a sensual perception, that is evoked by the reflection of sun and moon. Such reflected light means for Goethe something beyond immediate perception, something which appeals to the imagination and goes beyond the visual impression, from the early Weimar years, from Der Fischer and the warning to Frau von Stein against the "Abglanz der Sterne des Himmels", to the reflection of the moon or stars in the lake in Dämmerung senkte sich von oben, and in the sea in the Klassische Walpurgis-



nacht.

The association here of two such "archetypal" images as the spring and the moon tempts us to go further, to see the primordial image of woman reflected in that of the source of life, the spring; but the context of the poem forbids any further elaboration. The images of the poem are independent entities, related by the common theme, "ich denke dein", and this series of imaginative, visual and auditory images ends in an expression of longing and expectation, in which the stars are evoked as symbols of hope and fulfilment:

Die Sonne sinkt, bald leuchten mir die Sterne.  
O wärest du da!

These last lines, in which the stars appear as lasting and permanent symbols of hope in the darkness of night, when the sun has set, are part of a development in Goethe's lyric poetry which is to find its finest expression in the symbolism of moon and stars in the late lyrics. Already in An den Mond, the moon had been a symbol of permanent order, a reassurance of stability in the face of flux and transience; in Der Fischer it was when these bodies were transformed by the liquid element, when "feuchtverklärt" and no longer fixed in their natural, unchanging order, that the human figure had lost his hold on his conscious will and had succumbed



to the elemental forces of nature. And much later, in Der Bräutigam, the stars, as in the last stanza of Nähe des Geliebten, are the sure guides of the poet, an assurance of hope and the symbolic expression of what Staiger calls "die ewigen Gedanken" <sup>57</sup>,

Um Mitternacht, der Sterne Glanz geleitet  
Im holden Traum zur Schwelle, wo sie ruht.  
O sei auch mir dort auszuruhn bereitet,  
Wie es auch sei, das Leben, es ist gut.

The moon, however, which again in the later lyrics is to represent the same kind of hope and promise as the stars, has none of this association in Nähe des Geliebten, where it is confined to the imagery of the last stanza. The image of the moon in the first stanza is an expression of an "In-Geiste-Sehen" <sup>58</sup> -- one of a series of images enumerated in a compelling way as a result of the rising and falling note at the end of the first and second lines respectively of each couplet. This kind of enumeration, in a different formal context, is also found in a poem written shortly before the West-östliche Divan, and which has certain images in common with the collection: Gegenwart.

This poem not only looks forward to the Divan, however, but also back to Goethe's enthusiasm for the Song of Songs, which he had translated in 1775; the dominant images of the poem -- sun, moon, roses and



lilies -- are found in the biblical text as well as in the ghazals of Hafiz<sup>59</sup>. The central image, however, is that of the sun; indeed, the poem, which starts as a love-song in which the beloved is associated, but not wholly identified with the sun, ends as a hymn in praise of "das ewige Licht":

Sonne! so sei du auch mir  
Die Schöpferin herrlicher Tage;  
Leben und Ewigkeit iets.

The moon is evoked here only as contrast or comparison, but is described in terms which recall the epithet of the Song of Songs, "lieblich wie der Mond":

Nacht! und so wär es denn Nacht!  
Nun überscheinst du des Mondes  
Lieblichen, ladenden Glanz.

Ladend und lieblich bist du,  
Und Blumen, Mond und Gestirne  
Huldigen, Sonne, nur dich.

"Ladend" and "lieblich" are terms which also recall the effects of moonlight in the early Weimar lyrics; in this, the first lyric poem to make any use of the image of the moon for nearly two decades, Goethe describes the "Glanz" of moonlight in terms which he has not used in this connexion since the early Weimar years. As a whole, however, the poem gives an indication of what is to come rather than what has gone, and the imagery of



roses and lilies shows its relationship with the Oriental imagery of the Divan rather than that of the pre-Italian lyrics. Moreover, the image of the moon here plays a secondary rôle to the sun; it has not yet assumed the independence that it has, to a lesser extent in the Divan, but more fully and widely in the poems of Goethe's last years.

#### 4. Observationes Lunae

If the moon has been conspicuously absent from the literary works between the end of the 1780's and the writing of the West-östliche Divan, it has been the object of considerable interest in Goethe's scientific researches -- in which, we must remember, he took at least as much pride, and to which he attached at least as much importance during this period of his life as to his artistic activity<sup>60</sup>. In the Annalen of 1799 he notes:

Im August und September bezog ich meinen Garten am Stern, um einen ganzen Mondwechsel durch ein gutes Spiegelteleskop zu beobachten, und so ward ich denn mit diesem so lange geliebten und bewunderten Nachbar endlich näher bekannt (JA.30.65).



As a result, he is able to announce to Knebel on 13th January, 1800, not without pride, that:

... [er sich] den vorigen Sommer bis auf einen gewissen Grad in die Mondfläche einstudirt habe (WA.IV.15.19);

and on 10th April of the same year he makes the very interesting passing remark to Schiller:

Es war eine Zeit, wo man den Mond nur empfinden wollte, jetzt will man ihn sehen. (WA.IV.15.54).

The attraction of scientific research and observation has replaced the lyrical perception of the moon, as we can see from the numerous diary entries and letters describing his lunar observations<sup>61</sup>, with the help of a telescope and a lunar map. In his letters he describes the revelations of his telescope -- which, as he tells Knebel, "zeigt den Mond köstlich" -- with as much enthusiasm as Galileo had done two centuries earlier; to Schiller:

Durch das Steinische Spiegelteleskop hab ich einen Besuch in den Mond gemacht. Die Klarheit mit welcher man die Theile sieht ist unglaublich; man muß ihn in wachsen und abnehmen beobachten, wodurch das Relief sehr deutlich wird (10th August, 1799; WA.IV.14.147);



and later in the same year:

... Diese Woche bin ich wider meine Gewohnheit meist bis Mitternacht aufgeblieben, um den Mond zu erwarten den ich durch das Auchische Teleskop mit vielen Interesse betrachte. Es ist eine sehr angenehme Empfindung einen so bedeutenden Gegenstand, von dem man vor kurzer Zeit so gut als gar nichts gewußt, um so viel näher und genauer kennen zu lernen. (WA.IV.14.161).

Indeed, Goethe seems to take to the telescope, at this stage at least, very much more easily than to the dreaded Newtonian prism; he evidently does not regard it as one of the "künstlichen Instrumente" of the physioists which distort nature -- possibly because it was still the human eye which remained the instrument of vision, even when the telescope was used as an auxiliary<sup>62</sup>. He writes to Knebel on 2nd April, 1800:

Das Teleskop ist nun aufgestellt und sein schönes Äußeres Ansehen ist lockend, so daß man auch seine innern Tugenden wünscht kennen zu lernen (WA.IV.15.46).

and some months later he describes the "inner virtues" of the instrument to him:

Das Teleskop hat mir und Freunden schon manchen vergnügten Abend gemacht. Es erregt die würdigsten Gefühle, wenn man einen so weit entfernten Gegenstand sich so nahe gerückt sieht, wenn es uns möglich wird den Zustand eines 50,000



Meilen von uns entfernten Körpers mit  
 so viel Klarheit einzusehen. Schröters  
 Selenotopographische Fragment sind frey-  
 lich dabey ein sehr schätzbares und unent-  
 behrliches Hülfsmittel (3rd November, 1800;  
 WA.IV.15.137-8).

It is only one of many paradoxes in Goethe's attitude and practice that he should also be able to declare in his Maximen und Reflexionen that "Mikroskope und Fernröhre verwirren eigentlich den reinen Menschensinn" (JA.4.229) -- just as he should himself use the prism, the most pernicious of the physicists' instruments, in order to confound Newton.

In the letters and diary entries describing his lunar observations there is, however, no echo of the polemics surrounding the Farbenlehre<sup>63</sup>. With almost childish pleasure and enthusiasm Goethe turns to his telescopes, inviting or constraining his guests to take turns at moon-gazing -- not all of whom shared the amateur astronomer's enthusiasm for spending a chilly February night watching the moon<sup>64</sup>. The years 1799-1801 are the most active for telescopic observation of the moon, but Goethe's interest in lunar phenomena is by no means restricted to this period; in 1826 he announces an eclipse of the moon to the Grand Duke in the appropriate style:



Ew. Königliche Hoheit erlauben,  
 daß ich die Anmeldung einer totalen  
 Mondfinsterniß hierbey übersende.  
 Dieses Gestirn wird Übermorgen, Dients-  
 tag den 14. November, Abends ein wenig  
 vor 5 Uhr, an unserem Horizonte völlig  
 verfinstert heraufsteigen und, seine  
 Bahn verfolgend, nach und nach an Licht  
 zunehmen, welches ein sehr angenehmes  
 Anblick seyn müste, wenn die Witterung  
 diese Stunden begünstigen wollte ...  
 (12th November, 1826; WA.IV.41.225).

Unfortunately, the last condition appears to have been  
 unfulfilled, as he writes apologetically on 16th November:

Ew. Königliche Hoheit geruhen aus  
 beykommender Schrönischen Meldung  
 gnädigst zu ersehen, daß Luna die Auf-  
 merksamkeit der Astronomen eben so  
 wenig begünstigt habe als die Sehnsucht  
 der Liebhaber, worin sich denn beide  
 wohl ergeben müssen ... (WA.IV.41.228-9).

By the turn of the oentury, Goethe had also been  
 working for some ten years on the Farbenlehre. This,  
 too, claimed at least as much of his attention as his  
 creative literary work at the time; and although the  
 moon obviously plays a subordinate rôle to the sun in  
 the observations and experiments on colour and light,  
 the moon is still the object of some interest in these  
 theories and experiments. The moon can, indeed, be  
 used as a substitute for the sun in some of the exper-  
 iments, and Goethe makes use of various luminous bodies  
 for his observations. He even scolds Newton for restrict-



ing his experiments to the light of the sun alone:

Das Licht des Mondes, der Sterne, einer jeden Kerze, eines jeden hellen Bildes auf dunkeltem Grund ist in dem Fall, uns die Phänomene zu zeigen, die man hier [in Newton's work] der Sonne als eigenthümlich zuschreibt (WA.II.2.47).

Some experiments, he advises, are more appropriate to moonlight than to sunlight, for various reasons:

Weil aber dieser Versuch blendend und unbequem ist, so macht er sich am schönsten mit dem Bilde des Vollmondes. Wenn man dieses durch ein convexes Glas zusammenzieht, so erscheint der farbige Rand in der größten Schönheit: denn der Mond sendet an sich ein gemäßigtes Licht, und er kann also um desto eher die Farbe, welche aus Mäßigung des Lichts entsteht, hervorbringen; wobei zugleich das Auge des Beobachters nur leise und angenehm berührt wird (WA.II.1.129).

The colour to which Goethe here refers is that closest to white light itself, yellow or yellow-red, produced when light is seen through a "zarte Trübe"; it is the colour of the moon seen through a light atmospheric haze<sup>65</sup>, and one of the "Farben von der Plusseite", which, being most closely related to pure light, "stimmen regsam, lebhaft, strebend"<sup>66</sup>.

There is a further examination of the colour of the moon in Goethe's sceptical treatment of balloonists' reports of a dark-red moon; he finds it difficult to



believe that the light of the moon could appear red at such a height, since he assumes that the balloonists had risen above the atmospheric haze which filters the moon's light and thus, according to the Farbenlehre, gives it a reddish colour to us. In a dubious and speculative observation<sup>67</sup>, he attributes the phenomenon to the confused sense-impressions of the "Luftfahrer" -- an interesting remark, perhaps, in view of Faust's and Mephisto's vision of a red moon from the Blochsberg! <sup>68</sup>.

One of Goethe's favourite experiments in the Farbenlehre was the observation of the "coloured shadows" produced by the juxtaposition of moonlight and artificial light<sup>69</sup>. Earlier, in Italy, his attention had been attracted by the beauty of his Italian hostess in the combined light of the moon, candles and the glow of Vesuvius<sup>70</sup>; later, even with his thoughts occupied by his "Suleika", it is the phenomenon of coloured shadows that claim his attention by full moon<sup>71</sup>. He describes the phenomenon among the Physiologische Farben:

Einer der schönsten Fälle farbiger Schatten kann bei dem Vollmonde beobachtet werden. Der Kerzen- und Mondenschein lassen sich völlig ins Gleichgewicht bringen. Beide Schatten können gleich stark und deutlich dargestellt werden, so daß beide Farben sich vollkommen balancieren. Man setzt die Tafel dem Schein des Vollmonds entgegen, das Kerzenlicht ein wenig an die Seite, in gehöriger Entfernung, vor die Tafel hält



man seinen undurchsichtigen Körper;  
 alsdann entsteht ein doppelter Schatten,  
 und zwar wird derjenige, den der Mond  
 wirft und das Kerzenlicht bescheint,  
 vom schönsten Blau gesehen werden 72.

Another phenomenon related to the moon which Goethe observes in the Farbenlehre is one he also deals with later in both his scientific and literary work: the appearance of an aura, or "Mondhof" around the moon, which later interests him during his meteorological studies, and which finds its way into the Klassische Walpurgisnacht. In the Farbenlehre, however, there is as yet only passing reference to this phenomenon:

Wenn der Himmel um die Sonne weiß  
 und leuchtend ist, indem leichte Dünste  
 oder Wolken um den Mond schweben, so  
 spiegelt sich der Abglanz der Scheibe  
 in denselben. Die Höfe, die wir alsdann  
 erblicken, sind einfach oder doppelt,  
 kleiner oder größer, zuweilen sehr  
 groß, oft farblos, manchmal farbig.  
 Einen sehr schönen Hof um den Mond sah  
 ich den 15. November 1799 bei hohem  
 Barometerstand und dennoch wolkigem  
 und dunstigen Himmel... (WA.II.1.160).

It is not surprising that such "Mondhöfe" should be of interest to Goethe both as a scientist and as an artist whose images of Abglanz and rainbow effects have such central importance in the expression of his thinking, the Spiegelung of light in mist, cloud and rain which forms an important part of his symbolism in Faust II.



At the time of the Farbenlehre, however -- and indeed during the whole of the two decades around the turn of the century -- Goethe's scientific preoccupation with the moon seems divorced from his literary or lyrical perception of it, and even seems to exclude the use of the image of the moon as a motif in the creative literary works. He seems to have drawn very little on his astronomical observations, or on his observations of the effects of moonlight recorded in the Farbenlehre (with the possible exception of the "Mondhof" phenomenon) as material for his literary work<sup>73</sup> in the way in which he incorporated his later Witterungslehre into the symbolism of his late lyrics and into the second part of Faust, or in which his interest in the vulcanist-neptunist controversy finds its way into the allegory of the Thales-Anaxagoras scene of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht<sup>74</sup>.

The fact that the moon appears more frequently and attracts more attention in the scientific works of this period than in the literary works is only a sign that at this time Goethe was more concerned with "sehen" than with "empfinden", as he told Schiller. It is in order to emphasise this that we have spent so long examining Goethe's scientific observations in connexion with the moon; for though they have relatively little interest or significance in themselves in an assessment of the



image of the moon in the literary works, the scientific studies form an important part of the work as a whole and cast some light on the development of Goethe's thought and outlook. It is significant enough that at the time when the image of the moon is temporarily in abeyance in the literary works of his "classical" period, the moon should command the attention of Goethe the scientist. And it is in the context of the most striking renewal of his lyrical output that the moon once more assumes value as a leitmotif in Goethe's poetry, with the West-östliche Divan. It was in the years preceding the Divan, however, that Goethe wrote the greater part of his later narrative works.

### 5. The Novels

It is hardly surprising that if we turn to Goethe's later novels to examine the image of the moon, we find that it has subordinate interest and importance in the works as a whole. Indeed, the landscape and nature itself largely represent in the novels only a backcloth against which the central interest of the novels is played out; the analysis of human passions in Die Wahlverwandt-



schaften, and the pedagogic social and ethical content of the Lehrjahre and the Wanderjahre render a natural setting almost superfluous. Yet the image of the moon does appear in the novels<sup>75</sup>, largely indeed only as an incidental part of the scene, but at times having a more significant purpose than simply being part of the "unbedeutsamen Schauplatz", of the "antlitzlosen, bei-läufigen Umgebung" <sup>76</sup>.

The majority of references in both parts of Wilhelm Meister are concerned simply with passing allusion to the light of the moon; significantly, perhaps, it is always a clear, bright full moon that lights up the landscape -- after the Italienische Reise the "trübe Mond" is relatively infrequent, reserved for such scenes as the Walpurgisnacht of Faust I. The moon in the Bildungsroman shines "herrlich", "voll", "hell", "klar und sanft" <sup>77</sup>; and on a journey through the night there is a comment on the effect of moonlight on the landscape which may be a memory of the Italian landscape where particular detail merged into the general by moonlight:

Bei Mondschein fand [Lydie] überall Ähnlichkeiten, und immer verschwanden sie wieder. Morgens schienen ihr die Gegenstände bekannt, aber desto unerwarteter ... (WA.I.23.36).

And there is a further scene in the Wanderjahre which



recalls the Italian nocturnal scenes with its reflection of the moon in water, the description of the delicate transition from day to night, and the contrast of artificial light with the light of the moon:

Es ist ein erfreuliches schönes Schauspiel um die Fahrt auf dem See, wenn der Spiegel desselben mit den anliegenden Gebirgen vom Abendrot erleuchtet sich warm und allmählich tiefer und tiefer schattiert, die Sterne sichtbar werden, die Abendhetglocken sich hören lassen, in den Dörfern am Ufer sich Lichter entzünden, im Wasser widerscheinend, dann der Mond aufgeht und seinen Schimmer über die kaum bewegte Fläche streut (WA.I.25.1.234).

In the Lehrjahre there is also a description of the moonlight lighting up the scene of the fire caused by the Harfner:

... Neben dem anmutigen Garten, den der eben aufgegangene Vollmond herrlich erleuchtet, standen die traurigen Ruinen, von denen hier und da noch Dampf aufstieg; die Luft war angenehm und die Nacht außerordentlich schön... (WA.I.22.220).

-- a far more dispassionate and less exuberant description than that of a similar scene in 1776 <sup>78</sup>.

There are even echoes from further back in some of the descriptions of moonlit nights in the Lehrjahre; the picture of Sperata pathetically searching the shore by moonlight for her lost child recalls, in less violent



language, the Ossianic passages of Werther:

Nun waren ihre Augen und ihre Sorgfalt immer nach dem See und dem Ufer gerichtet. Wenn nachts im Mondglanz sich die Wellen unschlügen, glaubte sie, jeder blinkende Saum treibe ihr Kind hervor; es mußte zum Scheine jemand hinablaufen, um es am Ufer aufzufangen... 79.

And, again in the manner of Werther, Wilhelm is stirred to sentimental memories by moonlight:

Der Vollmond, eine reiche Flur beleuchtend, war schon herauf und weckte ähnliche und gleiche Erinnerungen in dem Busen unseres Wanderers. Die Geister aller lieben Freunde zogen bei ihm vorüber, besonders aber war ihm Leonards Bild so lebendig, das er ihn unmittelbar vor sich zu sehen glaubte. Dies alles gab ihm ein inniges Behagen zur nächtlichen Ruhe... 80.

The farewell scene by Lake Maggiore at the end of the second book of the Wanderjahre contains elements from both Goethe's earlier and later moon-landscapes. At times it seems to border on the lachrymose Empfindsamkeit of the passages from Stella, where Luna was similarly witness to "keuschen Tränen", or the moonlight scene at the end of the first book of Werther<sup>81</sup>; or again, this "ausschließlich und lyrisch anerkannte" scene has something in common with the Italian landscapes under moonlight, again with the splendid effects of moonlight on water. More than that, though, this scene, with



its overall mood, has the magical quality of the last moonlit night in Rome, "quae mihi supremum tempus in Urbe fuit", with its "fast ängstliches Verstummen"; and it has this also in common with the scene on ice from the Novelle Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren, or even with Vollmondnacht of the Divan<sup>82</sup>;

... Der letzte Abend war nun herangekommen, und ein hervorleuchtender klarster Vollmond ließ den Übergang von Tag zu Nacht nicht empfinden. Die Gesellschaft hatte sich zusammen auf einer der höchsten Terrassen gelagert, den ruhigen, von allen Seiten her erleuchteten und rings widerglänzenden See, dessen Länge sich zum Teil verbarg, seiner Breite nach ganz und klar zu überschauen.

Was man nun auch in solchen Zuständen besprechen mochte, so war doch nicht zu unterlassen das hundertmal Besprochene, die Vorzüge dieses Himmels, dieses Wassers, dieser Erde, unter dem Einfluß einer gewaltigern Sonne, eines mildern Mondes nochmals zu bereden, ja sie ausschließlich und lyrisch anzuerkennen.

Was man sich aber nicht gestand, was man sich kaum selbst bekennen mochte, war das tiefe schmerzliche Gefühl, das in jedem Busen, stärker oder schwächer, durchaus aber gleich wahr und zart sich bewegte. Das Vorgefühl des Scheidens verbreitete sich über die Gesamtheit; ein allmähliches Verstummen wollte fast ängstlich werden.

Da ermannte, da entschloß sich der Sänger, auf seinem Instrumente kräftig präladierend, uneingedenk jener früheren wohlbedachten Schonung. Ihm schwebte Mignons Bild mit dem ersten Zartgesang des holden Kindes vor. Leidenschaftlich über die Grenze gerissen, mit sehnsüchtigen Griff die wohlklingenden Saiten aufregend, begann er anzustimmen:



Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen  
blühen,  
Im dunklen Laub --

Hilarie stand erschüttert auf und entfernte sich, die Stirne verschleiern; unsere schöne Witwe bewegte, ablehnend, eine Hand gegen den Sänger, indem sie mit der andern Wilhelms Arm ergriff. Hilarie folgte der wirklich verworrene Jüngling, Wilhelm zog die mehr besonnene Freundin hinter beiden drein. Und als sie nun alle viere im hohen Mondschein sich gegenüber standen, war die allgemeine Rührung nicht mehr zu verhehlen. Die Frauen warfen sich einander in die Arme, die Männer umhalsten sich, und Luna ward Zeuge der edelsten, keuschesten Tränen ...  
(WA.I.24.372-3).

Apart from the curious astral symbolism used to describe, or suggest, the nature of Hilarie and her position in the Sonnensystem<sup>83</sup>, there is one other scene in the Wanderjahre which stands out from all other descriptions of moonlight in the novel in that it plays a considerable part in the action itself, and even points to the function of the moon in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, assuming almost symbolic significance in the description of the skating episode in Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren.

This scene on ice is the crucial scene in the whole action of the Novelle; it represents the climax of the growing Verwandschaft between Flavio and his cousin Hilarie, who, we are given to believe, has come to feel for the son the very love which she thought she



felt for his father the Major. This impossible situation is carefully prepared before the skating scene; the symbolism is clear: the son, recovering at home from his rejection by the "schöne Witwe", dresses in a coat belonging to his father. The striking similarity between the two disturbs the unsettled girl, who has already recognised the son in a miniature portrait of the man to whom she is betrothed:

Für Hilarie ... blieb die Ähnlichkeit des jugendlichen Vaterbildes mit der frischen Lebensgegenwart des Sohnes unheimlich, ja bedrängend ...

The dangerous relationship continues, until it reaches the critical stage "wo Verwandtschaft und Neigung zum wechselseitigen Annähern und Festhalten sich berechtigt glauben" 84.

It is at this point that nature takes a hand; a spell of cold weather freezes the flooded countryside, and offers the two young people, by now uneasily aware of their growing passion, opportunities to spend whole days on the ice. By day, this pastime is harmless, devoted to business, visiting and doing errands; it is by night that their company on the ice assumes a deeper significance:

War man den Tag in so rascher



Bewegung und dem lebhaftesten Interesse beschäftigt, so verlieh der Abend auf ganz andere Weise die angenehmsten Stunden ...

-- And it is by night, on the moonlit ice, that Goethe, recalling the sport of his youth<sup>85</sup>, sets the scene for the lovers' last hopeless but blissful encounter; soon after Hilarie, like Ottilie, renounces her illicit passion.

On the surface of the ice, the two lovers dance in a world of their own, unreal and lighthearted. The game is frivolous:

Scheiden und Meiden, was sonst so schwer aufs Herz fällt, ward hier zum kleinen scherzhaften Frevel, man floh sich um sich einander augenblicks wieder zu finden...

-- but not without its danger, a symbolic and unreal dance in which they are indeed skating on thin ice:

... denn das hat die Eislust vor allen andern körperlichen Bewegungen voraus, daß die Anstrengung nicht erhitzt und die Dauer nicht ermüdet. Sämtliche Glieder scheinen gelenker zu werden und jedes Verwenden der Kraft neue Kräfte zu erzeugen, so daß zuletzt eine selig bewegte Ruhe über uns kommt, in der wir uns zu wiegen immerfort gelockt sind ...

This calm scene on the ice by night, in which the lovers "sich von dem glatten Boden nicht loslösen können".





Fig.10. Winterliche Mondnacht am Schwansee.



develops into a mysterious and beautiful mime, parting and meeting again, clasping hands and moving in perfect rhythm together. The "symbolic transparency" of the scene, as Staiger puts it<sup>86</sup>, only becomes complete, however, when the full moon rises above the frozen fields and casts its light over the ice; the familiar motif of Spiegelung, of the moon reflected in water, occurs once again, this time on frozen water, and this time not simply as natural description, but as an effect which transforms the ice, the trees and the hills into an unreal, magic and dreamlike landscape in which the couple can express their feelings for the last time:

Der volle Mond stieg zu dem  
glühenden Sternenhimmel herauf und  
vollendete das Magische der Umgebung.  
Sie sahen sich wieder deutlich und  
suchten wechselseitig in den beschatteten  
Augen Erwidern wie sonst, aber es  
schien anders zu sein. Aus ihren  
Abgründen schien ein Licht hervor-  
zublicken und anzudeuten was der Mund  
weislich verschwie, sie fühlten sich  
beide in einem festlich behaglichen  
Zustande.

Alle hochstämmigen Weiden und Erlen  
an den Gräben, alles niedrige Gebüsch  
auf Höhen und Hügeln war deutlich geworden;  
die Sterne flammten, die Kälte war ge-  
wachsen, sie fühlten nichts davon und  
führten dem lang daher glitzernden Wider-  
schein des Mondes, unmittelbar dem himm-  
lischen Gestirn selbst entgegen ...

This unreal dream, however, expressed in movement and rhythm on ice, made doubly transparent and luminous



by the light of the moon, "das Licht der Innerlichkeit" -- a function the moon, and its reflection in water, is to have in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht -- which was itself written only shortly after this Novelle -- must inevitably suffer the intrusion of what the lovers had forgotten in their dance. The scene at once loses "das Magische", and the appearance of a third figure, flitting between light and shade in the whiteness of the moonlight, transforms the idyllic landscape into an uncanny, almost sinister scene; and so, too, the exalted mood of the couple is shattered, their "innere Gestalt" no longer reflects the magical effect of the scene before the intrusion, but reflects the confusion, the "Verwirrung, Verirrung" of the visual effect produced by the silent, ghostly circling movement of the third figure, the skater who seems to be following his own shadow:

... Da blickten sie auf und sahen im Geflimmer des Widerscheins die Gestalt eines Mannes hin- und herschweben, der seinen Schatten zu verfolgen schien und selbst dunkel vom Lichtglanz umgeben auf sie zuschritt; unwillkürlich wendeten sie sich ab, jemanden zu begegnen wäre widerwärtig gewesen. Sie vermieden die immerfort sich herbewegende Gestalt, die Gestalt schien sie nicht bemerkt zu haben und verfolgte ihren geraden Weg nach dem Schlosse. Doch verließ sie auf einmal diese Richtung und umkreiste mehrmals das fast beängstigte Paar. Mit einiger Besonnenheit suchten sie für sich



die Schattenseite zu gewinnen, im vollen Mondglanz fuhr jener auf sie zu, er stand nah vor ihnen, es war unmöglich den Vater zu verkennen.

The whole situation, the whole depiction of the growing awareness of love, the impossibility and dangerous delicacy of the Wahlverwandtschaft between the two cousins is contained in this evocation of the moonlight scene on the ice, as are the shock of discovery and the disturbed feelings with which the three persons set off for the house; Hilarie loses her balance and her composure, and her fall on the ice is only the outward gesture which mimes the "plötzlichen Absturz von einer schwindelerregenden Höhe":

Auszumalen ist nicht die innere Gestalt der drei, nunmehr nächtlich auf der glatten Fläche im Mondschein Verirrten, Verwirrten ...

The rest of the Novelle deals rather summarily with the fate of the characters involved. Hilarie renounces, Flavio is simply removed from the scene, and only the reaction of the Major is dealt with in any detail within the scope of the Novelle. He, too, renounces in his own way, not without an effort, but also not wholly without humour; he is at least freed from the obligation to compete with youth in a field where he has a grave initial disadvantage. As his friend and "cos-



metician", the actor, puts it, "für einen Mann in gewissen Jahren sei das sicherste kosmetische Mittel, sich des schönen Geschlechts zu enthalten und einer löblichen bequemen Freiheit zu genießen". And it is perhaps an ironical comment on the part of the "narrator" himself when the Major recalls a poem, "dessen rhythmische Ausführung uns nicht gleich beiegt, dessen Inhalt jedoch durch zierliche Gleichnisse und anmutige Wendung sich auszeichnete", and which uses the very same metaphor as Tasso had used to illustrate a similar relationship in a different context:

Der späte Mond der zur Nacht noch  
anständig leuchtet verblast vor der  
aufgehenden Sonne; der Liebeswahn des  
Alters verschwindet in Gegenwart  
leidenschaftlicher Jugend ...

Of the other later prose-works, only Die Wahlverwandtschaften contains any allusion to the moon or moonlight, and it is difficult to see the image of the moon in this novel as of much more importance than simply as an element in the landscape. It has been suggested that the moon -- and the sun -- play a quasi-symbolic rôle in the action of the novel<sup>87</sup>, and even that the reversal of the order "Sonne und Mond" in one passage to "Mond und Sonne" indicates "daß der Mond wieder in



seine alten Rechte als hervorragender Faktor einer reizvollen deutsche Landschaft eingetreten ist" <sup>88</sup>.

This searching for meaning or significance in what is only a minor element in the work as a whole goes far beyond what we are justified in reading into the text, in spite of the fact that this novel above all has very strong and frequent symbolic elements. The moon is directly referred to only twice as part of the immediate landscape. When Eduard, unable to sleep on account of his growing passion for Ottilie, in the conviction "daß sein höchster Wunsch erfüllt sei" spends the night beneath her window, the waning moon sets the scene in the garden:

Der abnehmende Mond steigt über den  
Wald hervor. Die warme Nacht lockt  
Eduarden ins Freie; er schweift umher,  
er ist der unruhigste und der glücklichste  
aller Sterblichen. (WA.I.20.141).

In the other scene, the moon plays a more significant part in the course of the action. Eduard, left alone with Ottilie by the lake after an incident in which a boat has capsized with the guests at her birthday celebrations, insists that the fireworks should be lit in spite of the fact that the company has returned to the house. There is certainly something representative, if not symbolic, in the almost erotic frenzy of the firework display, which is not without its effect



on the impetuous feelings of Eduard; and Ottilie is disturbed by this outward display of explosive and short-lived energy:

Raketen rauschten auf, Kanonenschläge donnerten, Leuchtkugeln stiegen, Schwärmer schlängelten und platzten, Räder gischten, jedes erst einzeln, dann gepaart, dann alle zusammen, und immer gewaltsamer hintereinander und zusammen. Eduard, dessen Busen brannte, verfolgte mit lebhaft zufriedenen Blick diese feurigen Erscheinungen. Ottiliens zartem aufgeregtem Gemüt war dieses rauschende blitzende Entstehen und Verschwinden eher ängstlich als angenehm ...

The violence of the illuminations dies down, and it is in the calm light of the moon that the two make their way back to the house. An incident which threatens to disrupt this mood is passed over lightly; earlier in the novel, Eduard, by daylight, had betrayed his rash and impulsive temperament by his anger with a persistent beggar; but he was calmed by the Hauptmann, and warned gently: "man sollte mäßig und gleichförmig in allem sein, auch im Wohltun" (I,6). Here, by moonlight, after the excitement of the fireworks and in the mood of quiet euphoria by moonlight, which again casts an unreal and possibly illusory light over the scene, the same beggar appears, and Eduard's impulsive nature shows itself in a gesture which betrays his own inner feelings more than his generosity:



Die Nacht war kaum in ihre Rechte wieder eingetreten, als der Mond aufging und die Pfade der beiden Rückkehrenden beleuchtete. Eine Figur, den Hut in der Hand, vertrat ihnen den Weg, und sprach sie um ein Almosen an, da er an diesem festlichen Tage versäumt worden sei. Der Mond schien ihm ins Gesicht, und Eduard erkannte die Züge jenes zudringlichen Bettlers. Aber so glücklich wie er war, konnte er nicht ungehalten sein, konnte es ihm nicht einfallen, daß besonders für heute das Betteln höchlich verpönt worden. Er hätte jeden gern glücklich gemacht, da sein Glück ohne Grenzen schien. (WA.I.20.161).

The symbolic quality of Die Wahlverwandtschaften is clear enough; the economy of style, the use of handwriting, magnetism, of the chemical terms in the title itself, and so on, show that Goethe is beginning to adopt a style and expression which suggests more than it says, and alludes more than it explains. It is even true that nature in the novel plays more than a purely descriptive part<sup>89</sup> -- the whole setting in the form of the stylised and enclosed park represents a self-contained and enclosed area within which the human action takes place, and the lake, too, assumes more figurative value as the novel progresses, a brooding and dangerous element which forms the scene and means of the catastrophe, the drowning of Charlotte's child. But the image of the moon features only as an element in the nocturnal landscape without any particular symbolic or figurative



value except in that it constitutes a part of this nocturnal landscape which is itself more often than not the scene of the confusion of feeling throughout the novel.

A purely lyrical perception or use of the image of the moon is hardly to be expected in Goethe's narrative prose works; what is remarkable is how close he comes to it in many passages. Werther had reflected the extravagant moon-landscapes of Ossian, and the whole of nature had in this early novel played an active part which it otherwise had only in the lyric poetry. In the later novels this is clearly less the case; but there are still scenes where the image of the moon, whether it appears figuratively or symbolically or not, is "lyrisch anerkannt". That is to say, that it is more than an object which forms part of a conventional nocturnal scene, that it serves to express the feelings of the persons involved in the scene, and helps to underline the "innere Gestalt" of the characters. This is particularly true of the scene on ice in the Novelle Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren; it is true to a less obvious and less effective extent in the farewell scene by Lake Maggiore and in the beggar-scene from Die Wahlverwandtschaften.



The prose-works do not, any more than the lyrics, the letters or the scientific writings of the years 1790-1813, give any indication of a development in the use of the image of the moon which prepares us for its abrupt and frequent reappearance in the poems of the West-östliche Divan, nor in any clear way for its continued recurrence in the later lyrics. The frequent explanation, or partial explanation, for the suddenly renewed lyrical output in the years following 1814 -- the visits to the Rhine and Main, the revisiting of his home town, the meeting with Marianne von Willemer, the inspiration of Eastern poetry, and so on -- are hardly sufficient to explain the re-emergence of the moon as a lyrical motif. This can be seen only in terms of the same renewal of Goethe's lyrical impulse after the immensely productive, but lyrically relatively arid years of his preoccupation with classical forms and themes, of his friendship with Schiller and the polemics of the Xenien, and of his scientific researches. "Der klassische Augenblick", says Staiger of this period, "meldet sich zuerst in einem Protest gegen nordische Innerlichkeit, in einem Triumph des Schauens über das Ahnen und Erinnern, der Gegenwart über das Künftige und Vergangene" <sup>90</sup>. The image of the moon, which for the pre-Italian Goethe had been associated more than anything



else with the lyrical expression of "Innerlichkeit, Ahnen und Erinnern", of the elegiac past and the unrealised future, and which in Italy had come to lose these "nordic" associations, does not return with any great originality or interest until the West-östliche Divan. And even this does not represent its full re-emergence as a central leitmotif; this happens only when Goethe leaves the East and returns to the inspiration of the Northern landscape for his lyrics, when he returns to the "Innerlichkeit, Ahnen und Erinnern" of his early works, but in the perspective of his old age.



## Chapter Five

### 1. Der West-Östliche Divan

### 2. Late Lyrics



# 1. Der West-östliche Divan

"Jene Dichter haben alle Gegenstände gegenwärtig und beziehen die entferntesten Dinge leicht aufeinander" <sup>1</sup>. The re-emergence of the moon as a lyrical motif in the West-östliche Divan marks the beginning of the second phase of Goethe's moon-poetry; but the use of the image in the Divan does not, on the other hand, prepare for the future development of the image in the later lyrics. The moon is used in this collection in varying contexts, as image, metaphor, and with allegorical or even symbolic overtones; but nowhere does it have the transparently symbolical value that it has in poems like Um Mitternacht or Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde. As a rule, it is used in the manner of Hafiz and the Oriental poets who "beziehen die entferntesten Dinge leicht aufeinander" -- as one of the images which form the stock-in-trade of the Persian poet, and which are used in profusion and almost indiscriminately to refer to the face, eyes, cheeks, brow, look or presence of the beloved. It is one of the many images which Goethe found in Hafiz and adopted for his own use, certainly in a highly personal way, in the Divan -- images like the rose, the nightingale, the candle and the moth, the sun and the moon.

Hafiz in particular uses the sun and moon inter -



changeably and frequently to express the physical charms of the beloved -- or the deity<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, in Goethe's Divan the moon is not reserved exclusively as a metaphor or simile for either Suleika or Hatem, but each is sun or moon, or both, throughout the collection, according to the context. As we shall see, Suleika in the form of Marianne von Willemer was, as we know from the letters, closely enough associated with the moon, or at least with the night of the full moon; in the poems, she is any image of brightness or light the poet calls to mind:

Du Allerliebstes, du mein Mondgesicht,  
O, du mein Phosphor, meine Kerze,  
Du meine Sonne, du mein Licht!  
(Nachklang)

A further feature of the Divan which distinguishes it from the rest of Goethe's lyric poetry is the strictly biographical and actual reference which so many of the poems have; for although in the study of Goethe's early moon-imagery it was at times relevant and valuable to deal with associations whose terms of reference went beyond the strict context of the poem itself, and though these extrinsic associations told us something about the development or significance of the image, such considerations were not absolutely essential to the assessment of the lyric poem, or of the image within the context of the poem. In the Divan, however, as



Staiger points out<sup>3</sup>, much is lost if we do not take account of the "glosses", extraneous but very relevant information concerning sources, anecdotes and situations. This extraneous information is not necessarily biographical, and may not itself be a sine qua non for an understanding or an interpretation of the poems; but it is useful as a guide to the sometimes unaccountable allusions in the collection. Goethe himself provided Noten und Abhandlungen zu besserem Verständnis; thus for example he explains what the moon and stars represented for the "Ältere Perser" -- a remark which has some reference to the very much earlier poem of the Mahometfragment<sup>4</sup>:

Den ganzen Tag über, das ganze  
Leben hindurch, sah der Perser sich von  
den Urgestirne [der Sonne] bei allen  
seinen Handlungen begleitet, Mond und  
Sterne erhellten die Nacht, ebenfalls  
unerreichbar, dem Grenzenlosen angehörig.  
(WA.I.7.19).

-- an idea which finds its lyrical expression in the Buch des Sängers:

Er hat euch die Gestirne gesetzt  
Als Leiter zu Land und See;  
Damit ihr euch daran ergetzt  
Stets blickend in die Höh 5.

Similarly, the motto of the Buch Suleika -- to which, significantly enough, the image of the moon is



restricted in the whole of the Divan<sup>6</sup> -- can be understood in terms of Goethe's relationship with Marianne, and her considerable part in the writing of the lyrics<sup>7</sup>. The lines are a verbatim translation from the Persian poet Sultan Selim -- but they are used by Goethe figuratively to express a personal analogy in allegorical form:

Ich gedachte in der Nacht,  
 Daß ich den Mond sähs im Schlaf;  
 Als ich aber erwachte,  
 Ging unvermutet die Sonne auf.

The allegory is not wholly unambiguous, however. It could be interpreted purely in the light of Marianne's contributions to the Divan, as expressing the gratified surprise of the poet who finds she is no "blasser Abglanz" of his own talent, but a poet of considerable independent merit<sup>8</sup>; or it could be an expression of the poet's amazement at the renewal of his own lyrical impulse<sup>9</sup>. The two things are clearly not wholly separable; at all events, the metaphor -- or allegory, strictly speaking, since the interpretation, whichever one we understand, is fully and exhaustively expressed in the image -- is the announcement of a theme which runs through the Buch Suleika as a leitmotif. This is the theme of Spiegelung which we have already noted in previous works<sup>10</sup>, and which here reaches its fullest



lyrical expression: the mutual and reciprocal giving and taking, the to and fro between sun and moon, shine and reflection, between Hata and Salsika, the dialogue of the lovers which is constantly expressed in images of opposition and union, of sun, moon, mirror, rainbow, etc. -- what Staiger calls "die ganze Entoptik des Divan" <sup>11</sup>.

The first expression of this is in the poem Gingo Biloba: it is a curious feature of the whole collection that Goethe, like the Eastern poets he describes in the Noten und Abhandlungen, takes his images where he finds them, -- in the leaves of the Gingo or the ripe chestnuts of the Heidelberg Schlosspark, or in an amulet given to him in jest by Marianne <sup>12</sup>. The images can assume symbolic value, as in the representation of a leaf as a symbol of unity in duality, or in that of a ripening chestnut as a symbol of lyrical creation. The idea of union in apparent opposites, of sun and moon, is treated less than symbolically in a playful analogy:

Salsika: Die Sonne kommt! Ein Prachterseheinen!  
Der Sichelmond unklammert sie.  
Wer konnte solch ein Paar vereinen?  
Dies Rätsel wie erklärt sich's? Wie?

Hata explains the phenomenon in erotic terms in another metaphor which recalls the themes of union and separation which Hafis expresses in images of light and darkness,



day and night<sup>13</sup>,

Auch sei's ein Bild von unsrer Wonne!  
 Schon seh ich wieder mich und dich,  
 Du nennst mich, Liebes, deine Sonne,  
 Komm, süßer Mond, umklemme mich!

This poem is an example of a procedure common enough in the Divan; as in Gingo Biloba and An vollen Büschelsweisen. Hafez -- though here on a less deeply symbolic, more playful level<sup>14</sup> -- spins his lyrical images to Suleika, taking as his starting-point a leaf, a chestnut or an amulet.

The polarity of day and night, light and dark, sun and moon, also runs through the poem Nachklang. Here the poet, far from being the pale reflection of the sun, the moon by day, as Tasso had felt, is associated with daylight, with the sun; but at night,

Vernagert bleich sind seine Wangen,  
 Und seine Herzenstränen grau.

It is at night that he needs Suleika, who is celebrated in terms of light in the darkness, in a series of images which clearly show Goethe's debt to Hafiz, but which are equally clearly his own<sup>15</sup>,

Laß mich nicht so der Nacht, dem Schmerze,  
 Du Allerliebste, du mein Mondgesicht,  
 O du mein Phosphor, meine Kerze,  
 Du meine Sonne, du mein Licht!



Similar imagery of light and darkness is used in the poem Wie soll ich heiter bleiben. / Entfernt von Tag und Licht?, which, in its original form, An Marianne, included in Goethe's letter to Willemer on 18th December, 1815, ran as follows:

Mir will es finster bleiben,  
Im vollsten Mondenlicht,  
Ich mag nicht singen, schreiben  
Und trinken mag ich nicht.

The use of sun and moon almost indiscriminately and indifferently to describe Suleika in terms of light prevents us from seeing any consistent identification of her figure in the Divan, or of her counterpart Marianne, with the image of the moon. Indeed, in one of Marianne's own poems, she herself uses the image to refer to her departed lover -- in an imitation of one of Hafiz's odes which uses the image of the moon to represent the (female) beloved<sup>16</sup>:

Was kann der Ostwind von der Qual  
Des armen Hersens sagen?  
O komm, es sehnet sich nach dir das Hoffnungsauge.  
Die Stadt verlies seit einer Woche  
Mein Mond, mir scheint's ein Jahr;  
Du kennest nicht der Trennung Leiden ...  
(Paralip. 46; WA.I.6.491).

What is clear, however, is that moonlight, and in particular the full moon, had a special and intimate significance for Goethe and Marianne, which finds its



expression in the lines from Vollmondnacht:

Euoh im Vollmond zu begrüßen  
Habt ihr heilig angelobet ...

The theme is not new in Goethe's experience; in the early Weimar years, the moon had been a similar tryst for him and Charlotte von Stein<sup>17</sup>. Now, with the re-emergence of the moon as a lyrical motif, this theme recurs, and at the same time Goethe's renewed interest in the moon as something more than an object of astronomical observation is expressed in the letters written during his journeys to the Rhine and Main<sup>18</sup>. It is "beym doppelten Schein des klarsten Mondes und einer Ihrer Majestät, dem König von Preußen gewidmeten Illumination" that he sees his native city for the first time in 17 years. The familiar scene of fires by moonlight attracts him in Frankfurt as it had done in Italy<sup>19</sup>, and on 26th October, 1815 he writes nostalgically from Weimar to Willemer:

... Am 18. fuhr ich mit Freund Meyer auf unsere Hügel um die Feuer welche auf Thüringens Höhen, zwar nicht so reichlich und prächtig als am Mayn, aber doch ganz anständig und fröhlich brannten, im Gansen zu überschauen; da vergegenwärtigte ich mir die Freunde und die über Frankfurts Panoram so zierlich aufpunktirten Flämmchen, und zwar um so mehr als es gerade Vollmond war, vor dessen Angesicht Liebende sich



jedesmal in unverbrüchlicher Neigung  
gestärkt fühlen sollen ... (WA.IV.26.121).

The memory of the nights of full moon during the two journeys to the Rhine and Main were to remain with Goethe until his death. Years later, during his withdrawal to Dornburg after the death of Karl-August, Goethe is to write his finest moon-lyric, Den aufgehenden Vollmonde; and although there is no echo in the Dornburg poem itself of the Vollmondnacht of the Divan<sup>20</sup>, nor of his tryst with Marianne, it is clear that the image of the moon by this time has for Goethe a wealth of association and sentiment which contributes to the compelling power with which it is used in the Dornburger Mondlied. And in the letter with which he sent the poem, dated Dornburg, 25. August 1828, to Marianne<sup>21</sup>, he asks

Mit dem freundlichsten Willkomm die  
heitere Anfrage: wo die lieben Reisenden  
am 25. August sich befunden? und ob sie  
vielleicht den klaren Vollmond beachtend<sup>22</sup>  
des Entfernten gedacht haben?

(Weimar, 23rd October, 1828; WA.IV.45.29).

Marianne's reply shows as much critical appreciation as personal sentiment; and she is clearly aware of her association with the last two of Goethe's Mondlieder, as well as the echo of the earlier Weimarer Mondlied:

... Was jenen 25. August anlangt,  
so kann ich ausführliches und überein-



stimmendes Zeugnis von ihm geben ...  
 Als der Mond, den ich leider nicht  
 aufgehen sah, über die Giebel der  
 Häuser trat, war es so reizend und  
 glänzend in den behaglichen Städtchen,  
 daß wir uns noch unter die Wandelnden  
 mischten, und den Weg nach dem Münster  
 einschlugen, den wir im Silberlicht  
 des Mondes unbeschreiblich schön sahen.  
 Nach Hause gegangen, blieb ich noch  
 lange Zeit auf dem Balcon und lies jenes  
 unvergleichliche Mondlied dem Gefühl  
 und den Worten nach in meiner Seele  
 anklingen; ich erinnerte mich jener Zeit,  
 wo ich es Ihnen so oft gesungen, und  
 fühlte 'jeden Nachklang froher und trüber  
 Zeit'. Hätte ich ahnen können, wie in  
 diesem Augenblick wirklich 'des Freundes  
 Auge mild über meinen Geschick' wehte,  
 ich würde gern mit ihm gerufen haben:  
 'Überselig ist die Nacht!' 23.

The poem Vollmondnacht takes as its origin another  
 of Hafiz's odes, or ghazals -- in its German form:

Gestern sah ich in den Locken  
 Meines Liebsten Bildes Wangen  
 Sie umgabens wie die Wolken  
 Die den vollen Mond umfängen.  
 Ich will küssen, küssen, sprach ich... 24.

Direct reference to the moon in Goethe's poem is  
 restricted to the last lines; but like the Weimarer  
 Mondlied, the mood of the poem is dominated by moonlight.  
 The first stanza is purely introductory, setting the  
 heavy, exotic and liquid mood of the night:

Herrin, sag was heist das Flüstern?  
 Was bewegt dir leis die Lippen?  
 Lispelst immer vor dich hin,  
 Liebliher als Meines Nippen!



Denkst du deinen Mundgeschwistern  
 Noch ein Pärchen herzu ziehn?  
 "Ich will küssen! Küssen! sagt ich"

It is in the second stanza that "das Magische" of the moonlit night is expressed in the most heavily "oriental" lines that Goethe ever wrote<sup>25</sup>. Much of the oriental trapping of the Divan strikes a spurious, or at best a deliberately playful note; in this stanza Goethe shows complete mastery over the exotic material he is using and imitating to such sensual effect. It is not only the emotive vocabulary that produces this effect, but the complex structure of assonance and alliteration, and the liquid sounds which simulate in auditory terms the visual effect of moonlight gleaming on foliage, expressed in images of precious stones:

Schau! Im zweifelhaften Dunkel  
 Glühen blühend alle Zweige,  
 Nieder spielet Stern auf Stern;  
 Und, smaragden, durchs Gesträuche  
 Tausendfältiger Karfunkel;  
 Doch dein Geist ist allem fern.  
 "Ich will küssen! Küssen! sagt ich."

The third stanza simply states the theme of lovers trysting by full moon, the personal implications of which we know; the assurance of mutual thought, and the theme of union in separation:

Dein Geliebter, fern, erprobet  
 Gleicherweise im Sauer süßen,



Fühlt ein unglückseliges Glück.  
 Euch im Vollmond zu begrüßen  
 Habt ihr heilig angelobet,  
 Dieses ist der Augenblick.  
 "Ich will küssen! Küssen! sag ich."

These verses are unique in Goethe's moon-lyrics -- indeed, as Staiger points out, in his whole lyrical production<sup>26</sup>. It is true that the Weimarer Mondlied is as distinct from the earlier An Luna as the Dornburger Mondlied is from An den Mond; but none of these three differ so entirely from each other as the Divan moon-lyric does from them. This is not due to the suppleness of the verse and the developed use of language alone; the associations and effects of moonlight in the second stanza of Vollmondnacht have no relation to its associations or effects anywhere else in Goethe's work, even within the Divan itself.

This may be largely because the moon and stars, as Viëtor points out, are here free from any symbolic or even metaphorical significance -- they are "so sehr unreflektierter Ausdruck der Sehnsucht, der Leidenschaft, das Mond und Sterne hier nur Feuerwerk beim Fest des Herzens scheinen ... Nichts von Symbolik und allwaltenden Mächten"<sup>27</sup>. The "zweifelhafte Dunkel" of this sensual oriental moonlight is far removed from the twilight over the Ilm, the Ossianic "Silberschauer" of An Luna, or the "volle Pracht" of the Dornburg moon;



and although the third line of the second stanza resembles in rhythm and expression a line from the opening scene of Faust II, the contexts of the two poems are so different that there is no question of a comparison<sup>28</sup>. It is hardly surprising that not many years later Goethe should feel quite estranged from the passionate Eastern ethos and expression of this poetry, in which it is not only the image of the moon that stands out as unique in his lyrical works.

## 2. Late Lyrics

If we wish to rediscover the thread of Goethe's lyrical development, and more particularly the development of the image of the moon in his work, we must turn from the Divan to his late lyrics, to those written between the end of his "Flucht in den Osten" and his death. For if the renewal of his lyrical impulse in the years 1813-1815 is one of the most striking phenomena in Goethe's career as a lyric poet, it represents anything but the exhaustion of that lyrical impulse, and the late lyrics display an equally, if not more astonishing creative lyrical power<sup>29</sup>. A remark made



by Goethe himself on his relationship with the poems of the Divan, and of these with his late lyrics, is also of interest. On the evening of 12th January, 1827, Mme. Eberwein had sung, together with some settings of the Divan poems, the lyric Um Mitternacht to Zelter's musical setting, which, as Eckermann reports, "den tiefsten Eindruck machte". Goethe's comment was: "Das Lied bleibt schön, so oft man es hört. Es hat in der Melodie etwas Ewiges, Unverwüßliches..."

It is not clear whether Goethe is here referring to Zelter's melody or his own text -- possibly the former. His later remark, however, is significant:

"Ich habe diesen Abend die Bemerkung gemacht, das diese Lieder des Divans gar kein Verhältnis mehr zu mir haben. Sowohl was darin orientalisches als was darin leidenschaftlich ist, hat aufgehört in mir fortzuleben; es ist wie eine abgestreifte Schlangenhaut am Wege liegen geblieben. Dagegen das Lied: Um Mitternacht hat sein Verhältnis zu mir nicht verloren, es ist von mir noch ein lobendiger Teil und lebt mit mir fort. - Es geht mir übrigens öfter mit meinen Sachen so, daß sie mir gänzlich fremd werden" <sup>30</sup>.

This poem, written on the night of 13th February 1818 <sup>31</sup>, is the first sign of a revival of the image of the moon in Goethe's lyric poetry after the Divan; a revival in a further sense, too, from much earlier -- for, as we shall see, the image of the moon as it appears in these later lyrics has its antecedents in the high-point of the first phase of Goethe's Mondlyrik



in the early Weimar years, whereas the moon of the Divan has no such parallel in his works earlier or later. Goethe gives further information about the poem in his review of the Neue Liedersammlung von K.F. Zelter, published in 1822, in which he again points out the personal significance of this Lebenslied:

Hier nun fühl ich den unwider-  
stehlichen Trieb, ein Lebenslied ein-  
zuschalten, das mir seit seiner mitter-  
nächtlichen Entstehung immer wert gewesen,  
komponiert aber von meinem treuen Wirkens-  
und Strebensgefährten Zelter zu einer  
meiner liebsten Produktionen geworden:

32

Um Mitternacht ging ich, nicht eben gerne,  
Klein, kleiner Knabe, jenen Kirchhof hin  
Zu Vaters Haus, des Pfarrers; Stern an Sterne,  
Sie leuchteten doch alle gar zu schön;  
Um Mitternacht.

Wenn ich dann ferner in des Lebens Weite  
Zur Liebsten mußte, mußte, weil sie zog,  
Gestirn und Nordschein über mir im Streite,  
Ich gehend, kommend Seligkeiten sog;  
Um Mitternacht.

Bis dann zuletzt des vollen Mondes Helle  
So klar und deutlich mir ins Finstere drang,  
Auch der Gedanke willig, sinnig, schnelle  
Sich ums Vergangne wie ums Künftige schlang;  
Um Mitternacht.

In derselben ist auch vorstehendes  
Lied enthalten; ich lade meine in Deutsch-  
land ausgesäeten Freunde und Freundinnen  
hierdurch schönsten ein, sich es recht  
innigst ansueignen und zu meinen Andenken  
von Zeit zu Zeit, bei nächtlicher Weile,  
liebevoll zu wiederholen. Man lasse  
mich bekennen, daß ich, mit dem Schlag



Mitternacht, im hellsten Vollmond aus  
 guter, mäßig-aufgeregter, geistreich-  
 anmuthiger Gesellschaft zurückkehrend,  
 das Gedicht aus dem Stegreife nieder-  
 schrieb, ohne auch nur früher eine  
 Ahnung davon gehabt zu haben (WA.I.41.1.369-70).

Goethe's insistence on the spontaneity of the poem, if we are to believe it, is puzzling. It is extraordinary, not only that he should write "aus dem Stegreife" such a poem which, in spite of certain features which might betray its hurried composition (the rhyme of "hin" and "schön" in the first stanza, for example), is on the whole a very accomplished one in both form and content; but also that such a spontaneous Lebenslied should have such clear thematic parallels with poems written very much earlier -- particularly in view of his claim that the poet had no idea "woher es kam und wohin es wollte" any more than the charioteer of Egmont. This poem is the first in a series of lyrics in which the symbolism of light, whether of sun, moon or stars, plays a dominant part<sup>33</sup> -- admittedly alongside other frequent symbols of Goethe's late work such as clouds, colours or mist; and though the sun clearly has pride of place as the dynamic source of light, the light of the moon and stars has no less symbolical value, and is no less finely expressed, in these late poems. The moon and stars at this time are used largely to express light



breaking through darkness, against a background of night; but at the same time the moon, though used with more consciously symbolic purpose than in the early Weimar poems, retains many of the personal symbolic or metaphorical associations it had and still has for Goethe, and which now recur in an unmistakable form.

The poem is a Lebenslied in its theme and form as well as in its personal associations for Goethe. It is again curious that this "impromptu" poem should not consist in a simple presentation of the nocturnal images of the hours in which it was reportedly written, but has as its theme the whole range of a person's life<sup>34</sup>: the boy, given up to simple childlike delight in the stars; the youth, torn between conflicting elements; and the old man, who sees in the moon a symbol of clarity and vision, linking past, present and future. The unity of the poem, indeed its whole dynamism, is in this progressive increase of light from beginning to end<sup>35</sup>; without this unity and development the poem would fall apart into three juxtaposed images<sup>36</sup>. As it is, the upward progression gives the poem an almost dramatic dynamism; for here the poet is speaking as a "handelnde Person", in spite of all the poem's lyrical and narrative elements.

There is also a complex formal unity to the poem;



the repeated phrases of assonance and alliteration, "Klein, kleiner Knabe", "Zur Liebsten mußte, mußte" and "Auch der Gedanke willig, sinnig, schnelle"; and the narrative introduction to the second and third stanzas: "Wenn ich dann ferner" and "Bis dann zuletzt". In the same way, the imagery develops associatively, but logically enough: the stars of the first stanza, the stars and aurora borealis of the second, and the full moonlight of the third. The lyrical climax of the poem is in the first line of the final stanza; Ronald Gray has found the appropriate expression for this swelling note, the open vowels of "Bis dann zuletzt des vollen Mondes Helle", and the deliberate cadence of the line: the moon, he says, appears "as it were in diapason" <sup>37</sup>. All the gratified acceptance of the vision of old age is felt and expressed in these two lines, concentrated in the image of the full moon:

Bis dann zuletzt des vollen Mondes Helle  
So klar und deutlich mir ins Finstere drang ...

The following two lines, far from simply expressing in conceptual terms what the image has already implied, develops the poet's vision, and a theme common enough in Goethe's late Gedankenlyrik is stated; one which had already found expression in the title of one of the Divan poems, In Gegenwärtigen Vergangenes, and which was



to find similar expression, but without the lyrical context of our poem, in the 1829 poem Vermächtnis:

Dann ist Vergangenheit beständig,  
Das Künftige voraus lebendig,  
Der Augenblick ist Ewigkeit.

The associations of the moon in Um Mitternacht are many and varied; not only is it a welcome image of light in darkness, a promise of fulfilment, a symbol of the clear vision of old age; it is associated with a compelling evocative power, a Magie no less mysterious than that of the scene on ice in Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren, a power of synthesis of thought, not as a result of reflection but of intuitive perception: "willig, sinnig, schnelle". The moon had on many occasions for Goethe been associated with memory and elegy; here the elegiac note has disappeared, and not only memory, but anticipation and present awareness are fused into one. The moon had previously been associated with a synthesis of space, in the letters to Frau von Stein and to Marianne von Willemer, and in the poem Vollmondnacht<sup>38</sup>; here it is a synthesis of time, one which was characteristic of Goethe's later thinking: "Dies zuletzt ist der Zustand der Freiheit des Geistes in der Entzückung der Sinne; Zustand der Altersweisheit, nicht als Entbehrung und Minderung des Lebenszustandes erlebt, sondern als Er-



füllung. Nun erst, mit dem Licht des vollen Mondes, bietet die Nacht ihren ganzen Zauber auf" <sup>39</sup>.

So the image of the moon has returned, in developed and refined and symbolic form, to Goethe's lyric poetry; and if one can use the expression with impunity in such general terms after Professor Wilkinson's stern warning about its misuses <sup>40</sup>, the term Steigerung would not be amiss here. This poem represents a Steigerung in Goethe's use of the image, a development towards his own definition of symbolism, in which he insists on das Inkommensurabele of the true symbol, the impossibility of exhausting the "meaning" of a symbol through one or any number of interpretations <sup>41</sup>.

It is perhaps too easy to see this poem in less than the most general symbolic terms, to interpret it as a poème à clef with reference to the stages of Goethe's own life (in spite of the allusion to the vocation of the father in l.3): the young boy's immediate and child-like-aesthetic reaction to nature-impressions; the passionate youth, torn between two loves, two ideals, two principles, or, as one critic has it, "zwischen Humanität und Sturm und Drang" <sup>42</sup>; and finally the wise Olympian whose mind embraces past, present and future, and whose reputed last words were -- "Mehr Licht!" And once again we are faced with the question how far



we should take up the biographical thread in relation to the poem. The question is more vexed here since, as we shall see, the almost literal thematic parallels between this and other poems virtually force biographical considerations onto their interpretation.

It is the painstaking researches of Walter Hof that lead us to see some of the images of Um Mitternacht, not necessarily in the light of Goethe's life, but rather in the light of poems which Goethe wrote both before and after this poem. Hof's thesis is that the poem has explicit and implicit associations with Charlotte von Stein; he takes as his principal "objective" evidence a remark made to Zelter, about a letter to Charlotte written years before from Italy, only three days after the completion of the poem<sup>43</sup>. This evidence is at best interesting and at worst irrelevant or unconvincing; but more relevant and important is the fact that there are close parallels between the imagery of Um Mitternacht and that of some of the poems addressed to Frau von Stein. We have seen how often the moon, the image associated with peace and calm, the soothing and stilling influence of moonlight was associated, and even identified, with the image of Charlotte in the early Weimar years, and how in the second version of An den Mond the moon became a symbol of permanent order and



values in the face of transience and flux. We have even noted the association of midnight and moonlight with Charlotte<sup>44</sup>.

This is in itself hardly enough to justify any parallels drawn between the Um Mitternacht of 1818 and the images of midnight and moonlight of the early Weimar years; as we have pointed out, the moon in this later poem is wider and deeper in its associations and symbolic expression than the moon-lyrics of 1775-1787. There is, however, a closer connexion; not only the moon, but the stars, had been for the poet of the early Weimar years, and earlier still<sup>45</sup>, an image of permanent and lasting values, of eternal and unchanging order -- and as such had been closely associated with the woman who had come to represent for Goethe the peace and stability he sought. He writes to her on 24th August, 1784:

... Je finis par un vers allemand  
qui sera placé dans le Poème que je  
chériss tant, parce que j'y pourrai parler  
de toi, de mon amour pour toi sous mille  
formes sans que personne l'entende que  
toi seule.

Gewiss ich wäere schon so ferne ferne  
Soweit die Welt nur offen liegt gegangen  
Beswaengen mich nicht übermaecht'ge Sterne  
Die mein Geschick an deines angehangen ...  
(WA.IV.6.344).

-- and the poem An Lida of 1781 has precisely the same



images of stars and Northern Light, the polarities of peace and eternal order and of flux and instability, as the second stanza of Um Mitternacht:

Denn seit ich von dir bin,  
Scheint mir des schnellsten Lebens  
Lärmende Bewegung  
Nur ein leichter Flor, durch den ich deine Gestalt  
Immerfort wie in Wolken erblicke:  
Sie leuchtet mir freundlich und treu,  
Wie durch des Nordlichts bewegliche Strahlen  
Ewige Sterne schimmern.

-- Here is the same polarity of images which has been noted in An den Mond; between river and moon, transience and permanence -- or, if one chooses to use biographical terms, between the pull of the restless Wanderer and the cool, calming spell cast by "Lida". Now, in recollection, perhaps in a spontaneous association made by the poet during a moonlit night, perhaps even in conscious recollection, these images return:

Gestirn und Nordschein über mir im Streite,  
Ich gehend, kommend, Seligkeiten sog!<sup>46</sup>  
Um Mitternacht.

In addition to this thematic connexion between Um Mitternacht and the early Weimar poems, however, there is a further fact to be taken into account which strengthens the link between past and present still further. In the Ausgabe letzter Hand of 1827, the late lyric was placed immediately after three poems



which form a trilogy: Für Ewig, Zwischen beiden Welten and Aus einem Stammbuch von 1604. The first of these was sent to Frau von Stein in June 1784<sup>47</sup>. Like the above lines, "Gewiss, ich wäre schon so ferne, ferne ...", it was ostensibly intended for the projected epic, Die Geheimnisse; but, as Staiger points out, it is more likely "das Goethe nur unter dem Vorwand, neue Strophen der Geheimnisse mitzuteilen, bei der Geliebten besonders innige Liebesgeständnisse einzuschmuggeln versuchte"<sup>48</sup>. Certainly the poem reads very much like this, and in the 1820 edition of Über Kunst und Altertum it was followed by the poem which celebrates the two figures who moulded the young poet:

Lida! Glück der nächsten Nähe,  
William! Stern der schönsten Höhe,  
Euch verdank' ich, was ich bin ...  
(Zwischen beiden Welten)

Most critics conjecture that the first six lines of this poem were written earlier, perhaps about the time of Für Ewig; the last three lines, however, and also perhaps the title<sup>49</sup>, date from later, presumably from the time of the first publication in 1820:

Tag und Jahre sind verschwunden,  
Und doch ruht auf jenen Stunden  
Meines Wertes Vollgewinn.



To complete this curious trilogy, Goethe included in the 1820 arrangement a translation, written in the same year, of a poem which he took to be Shakespeare's, an ode to hope in the baroque manner, full of metaphorical conceits addressed to "Cynthia" -- the moon:

... wie sie sich oben umgestaltet,  
 So auf der Erde schwindet, wächst mein Glück.  
 .....  
 Und ihr Gedanken, miszutraun geneigt,  
 Beschilt euch die Geliebte dessenthalb,  
 So sagt: ihr wechselt zwar, doch ändert nicht,  
 Wie sie dieselbe bleibt und immer wechselt ...

It can only remain speculative to relate this poem to the figure who for the early Goethe had been so closely associated with the image of the moon, and of whom he had used the very words: "Sie sind immer gleich" <sup>50</sup>, or to go further, and relate the whole trilogy to the poem Um Mitternacht which was placed immediately after it in the 1827 edition. Hof certainly does so <sup>51</sup>, and though his efforts to read into Um Mitternacht, via the trilogy, the whole history of Goethe's reconciliation with Frau von Stein are perhaps too overtly biographical, yet his conclusions support convincingly the relation of the imagery of Um Mitternacht to that of An Lida, as well as the (heavily disguised) echo of the image of the moon of the early Weimar period in the poem which was ostensibly in homage to Shakespeare. That the



latter is related both to Charlotte and Shakespeare would seem evident from the linking of the two personalities by means of the trilogy<sup>52</sup>, particularly in the middle poem, and the deliberate harking back to the past in the last three lines of Zwischen beiden Welten, written in 1820.

Thus far -- and perhaps too far. For we must be more than careful in attributing biographical reference to Goethe's late lyrics above all, where in the early Weimar years, and earlier, it was only too easy to trace the threads linking "Dichtung" and "Wahrheit", and whereas in some instances, as we have tried to show, it was of positive value to do so in the examination of the moon-image, in the late lyrics the particular is so absorbed into the general, the symbol is so inkommensurabel, that no one woman can be distinguished behind the image<sup>53</sup>. It suffices to point out that in Um Mitternacht, the imagery of moon and stars that is used is so strikingly similar to that of the early Weimar years that there seems to be some association, voluntary or involuntary, in the mind of the poet -- particularly taking into account the retrospective time-basis of the poem. The image of the moon, however, is here, within the poem itself, freed from any particular reference or relevance, and this is in itself a symptom of Goethe's



development as a lyric poet: the image, long since a significant leitmotif, has become symbol.

The light-symbolism of Um Mitternacht is a dominant feature of Goethe's late nature-lyrics; one of its finest and last expressions is the poem Der Bräutigam, which, though the image of the moon is absent, has considerable similarities to the earlier lyric<sup>54</sup>. Here the sun is the central symbol of hope; but the poem turns no less than Um Mitternacht around the hour of midnight, the time-basis running from midnight to midnight. Again, biographical parallels are by no means lacking<sup>55</sup> -- in the case of this poem much more dubious than in the earlier Lebenslied. It is a night poem, dominated by images of light: the confusion of night and day, the setting and rising sun, and the stars; and again there is an echo of earlier motifs. The most striking of these is the opening of the last stanza:

Um Mitternacht, der Sterne Glanz geleitet  
Im holden Traum zur Schwelle, wo sie ruht ...

-- there is here an echo of the idea of the second stanza of An Luna; the separated lovers are brought together in a dream, or in the imagination, by the light of the stars here, by that of the moon there:



Forschend übersieht dein Blick  
 Eine großgemeine Weite.  
 Hebe mich an deine Seite!  
 Gib der Schwärmerei dies Glück,  
 Und in wollustvoller Ruh  
 Säh der weitverschlagne Ritter  
 Durch das gläserne Gegitter  
 Seines Mädchens Nächten zu.

There is a powerful contrast, certainly, between the rococo, lascivious tone of the early poem and the hushed cadence of the late lyric; but the Bräutigam lines represent the finest and most concise expression of a motif which we have noted throughout Goethe's writing; the theme of the moon or the stars as a tryst by which separation is overcome in the imagination -- a theme which takes on various modulations, in the early An Luna, in the letters to Frau von Stein, in the Vollmondnacht of the Divan, and finally in its last echo in the Dornburger Mondlied<sup>56</sup>. It reappears in 1825, almost at the same time as Der Bräutigam, in Goethe's translations of Greek folksongs:

Diese Richtung ist gewiß,  
 Immer schreite, schreite!  
 Finsternis und Hindernis  
 Drängt mich nicht zur Seite.

Endlich leuchtest meinem Pfad,  
 Luna! klar und golden;  
 Immer fort und immer grad  
 Geht mein Weg zur Holden.



Nun der Fluß die Pfade bricht,  
 Ich zum Nachen schreite,  
 Leite, liebes Himmelslicht!  
 Mich zur andern Seite.

Seh ich doch das Lämpchen schon  
 Aus der Hütte schimmern,  
 Laß um deinen Wagenthron  
 Alle Sterne schimmern.

(Neu-griechische Liebeskolien I) 57.

-- this short playful poem contains images and motifs so characteristic of Goethe -- hut, moon, separation and union, stars, light in darkness -- that it might be taken as a careless composition of his own.

The nocturnal poems of Goethe's last years all seem interrelated in a striking way, however distant they are in time of composition, whether the similarities are those of theme, imagery or metre. For the last stanza of Der Bräutigam has the same swelling note, or "diapason" as the last stanza of Um Mitternacht; more subdued, less grandiose, but harmonious and affirmative:

Um Mitternacht, der Sterne Glanz geleitet  
 Im holden Traum zur Schwelle, wo sie ruht.  
 O sei auch mir dort auszuruhen bereitet,  
 Wie es auch sei, das Leben, es ist gut.

It is also this affirmative quality, a quasi-religious Bejahung of life, that is so common in the late lyrics<sup>58</sup>, and among the principal symbols of this affirmation are



those of light breaking through darkness -- of "der Sterne Glanz" or "des vollen Mondes Helle". Of the earlier demonic night-imagery there is no trace, either of the claustrophobic landscape of Willkommen und Abschied or Erlkönig, or of the ironical touches of moonlight in later ballads like Hochzeitslied or Der Totentanz<sup>59</sup>. In An Werther, the attitude is expressed succinctly:

Des Menschen Leben scheint ein herrlich Los;<sup>60</sup>  
Der Tag wie lieblich, so die Nacht wie groß.

The same religious affirmation, coupled with a feeling for the mysterious Magie of moonlight and starlight at night, the eternal symbols, is even more positively expressed in lines which appeared among the Zahme Xenien in 1827. It is indeed only the immediate connexion between these lines and their moralising sequel<sup>61</sup> that prevents their inclusion among the pure lyrics:

Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen,  
Schlaf dir von der Stirne streifen,  
Mondenlicht und Sternenflimmern  
Dich mit ewigem All unschimmern,  
Scheinst du dir entkörperpert schon,  
Wagest dich an Gottes Thron.

These few lines contain much that is also common to the opening scene of the second part of Faust. The



time-element is the same: an evocation of night as the time of mystery and inner experience, followed -- in the Xenien, certainly, in a rather different tone from that of the Faust passage -- by the day, the time of activity and clear vision, of "Schwerer Dienste tägliche Bewahrung"; and both passages have the association of elves, of good spirits with moonlight and starlight:

Notturmo:

Nacht ist schon hereingesunken,  
Schließt sich heilig Stern an Stern,  
Große Lichter, kleine Funken  
Glitzern nah und glänzen fern,  
Glitzern hier im See sich spiegelnd,  
Glänzen droben klarer Nacht,  
Tiefsten Ruhens Glück besiegelnd  
Herrscht des Mondes volle Pracht.  
(vv. 4642-49)

The metre and rhyme-scheme of these two passages give them a distinct formal difference; but they have similarities of motifs and theme which seem to justify their being closely related, and which, if we accept their relation, point to the fact that Goethe had, by the time he wrote Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen, already made a considerable change in his plans for the opening scene of Faust II.

In his original draft for the plan for the second part, Goethe had indicated his intention for the opening



scene; the elves were to convey to the sleeping Faust "ihre eigentlichen ironischen Anträge ... in schmeichelnde Worte und Melodien ... ihm die Freuden der Ehre, des Ruhms, der Macht und Herrschaft vorspiegelnd" <sup>62</sup>. This was his original conception of Faust's rejuvenation, which was to be reflected in the rest of the play -- Faust's ambition for "Ruhm, Macht und Herrschaft" in the Emperor's palace and in the battle-scenes of the second part. Wolfgang Schadewaldt points out that Goethe stuck to this plan "bis in die zwanziger Jahre, ja wahrscheinlich bis Ende Mai 1827" <sup>63</sup>, and that it was probably only in the summer of that year that he changed his plan, and substituted for the "ironischen Anträge" of the elves "die Mahnung zu dem Echten, was ihnen zugrunde liegt: einem tätigen Leben" <sup>64</sup> -- which is what constitutes the scene in its final form.

Schadewaldt's assumption is based on the remarkable similarity between the elves' chorus and the poem Dämmerung senkte sich von oben, written in the early summer of 1827; but although Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen does not show such clear parallels with the elves' chorus as does Dämmerung senkte sich von oben, the similarity is still striking. There is no irony in these lines from the Zahme Xenien, and they have the same motifs of moon, stars and release from daily care -- Entkörperung.



Moreover, the Xenien lines have one thing in common with the elves' chorus which Dämmerung senkte sich does not -- the idea of day following night, activity following rest. This notion of rest and rejuvenation in preparation for activity is the very core of the opening scene of Faust II -- and indeed an integral element of the action of the drama as a whole<sup>65</sup>.

The purpose of this comparison is by no means to dispute Schadewaldt's thesis, nor his dating of the Elfenzene; our principal purpose is only to show the similarity of motifs, particularly that of the moon, between the lines from the Zahme Xenien, the Notturmo of the elves' chorus and the poem from the Chinesisch-deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten. It can clearly not be proved definitively when Goethe altered his original conception of the elves' ironical temptations of Faust with worldly success and replaced it by the more serious and integral notion of sleep, regeneration and awakening to a new and active life. But if we can draw any parallel between Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen and the Elfenzene, it would appear that Goethe had begun to think along the lines of his final conception of the Faust-scene by the time the former lines were written; and though this date is not certain, it seems probable that they were among the lines Goethe included relatively



late in the collection of Xenien for the fourth volume of the Ausgabe letzter Hand of 1827 -- that is, that they were written some time between the spring of 1824 and their final despatch for publication in February 1827<sup>66</sup>.

In Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen, the moon had been primarily a motif which had the same symbolic quality as that which the moon and stars had had, to a certain extent, in the early Weimar poetry, and which was revived more fully and consciously in Um Mitternacht -- a symbol of "das Ewige", the permanent cosmic order to which the old poet turns for hope and light. In the elves' chorus of Faust II, yet another association from the early Weimar lyrics recurs in connexion with the moon -- that of peace, rest and regeneration. We have already noted this association in the earlier lyrics<sup>67</sup>, and we have already seen how, on two occasions, Faust has longed for escape, rest and oblivion -- and how on each occasion the healing oblivion he seeks has been associated more or less directly with the moon<sup>68</sup>. In the opening monologue of the first part, he had longed to bathe away his "Wissensqualm" in the dew of the Ossianic moon; and it seemed almost that his request had been granted in the Wald und Höhle scene, where the



spirits of antiquity are evoked in the silver moonlight in order to "lindern der Betrachtung strenge Lust". In the first part of the drama, however, such oblivion had proved impossible: the familiar, Mephisto, was never far away to shatter Faust's dream. It was not until the opening of the second part that this "therapeutic" oblivion is granted to Faust -- and once again the image of the moon is a dominant, active factor in the process of healing.

Ariel's commission to the elves in the opening lines of the scene even has verbatim echoes of Faust's appeal to his "trübseelger Freund" of the Urfaust: the notion of bathing in dew which forms the climax of Faust's desire -- the dew which in other contexts, too, has for Goethe been associated with moonlight and recovery from strain and stress<sup>69</sup> -- is also present here. As a preparation for his vision of the sun, for his adventures in the "höhere, breitere, hellere, leidenschaftslosere Welt"<sup>70</sup> of the second part, Faust is to be given the sleep of a clear moonlit and starlit night:

Besänftiget des Herzens grimmen Strauß!  
 Entfernt des Vorwurfs glühend-bitter Pfeile,  
 Sein Innres reinigt von erlebtem Graus!  
 Vier sind die Pausen nächtiger Weile:  
 Nun ohne Säumen füllt sie freundlich aus!  
 Erst senkt sein Haupt aufs kühle Polster nieder,  
 Dann badet ihn im Tau aus Lethes Flut!



Gelenk sind bald die krampferstarrten Glieder,  
 Wenn er gestärkt dem Tag entgegenruht ...  
 (vv. 4623-31).

It is in the four vigils that follow, and particularly in the Notturmo, that Faust's Heilsschlaf is completed. The elemental spirits evoke an image of deepest night, punctuated by the light of the stars and the moon. These lights, moreover, are reflected in the waters of a lake; they are "doppelt schön", "doppelt leuchtend" -- to take phrases from other contexts where the same motif of Widerspiegelung has been employed in connexion with the heavenly bodies<sup>71</sup>. The reflection of the moon in water, a common enough motif in the lyrical and descriptive writings of Goethe, is here used to double the effect of peace and calm evoked by the full, steady, permanent light of the moon<sup>72</sup>, which "seals" the recovery and regeneration of Faust in the Lethe he had previously yearned for, and which is now fully and richly expressed in the assonances of the final lines:

Glitzern hier im See sich spiegelnd,  
 Glänzen droben klarer Nacht,  
 Tiefsten Ruhens Glück besiegelnd  
 Herrscht des Mondes volle Pracht.  
 (vv. 4646-49)

The process of Faust's regeneration does not end here; the demands of the dramatic action require two



more stanzas to complete the nocturnal cycle, and Faust must awake to the tumult of the sunrise. But his healing, his Lethe-sleep, has been effected essentially in the Notturmo; the elves, the healing spirits, flee with the sunrise, and the moon has fulfilled its function as the symbol of peace:

Schon verloschen sind die Stunden,  
Hingeschwunden Schmerz und Glück ...  
(vv. 4650-1)

The continuation of the theme into the Matutino and Réveil is, as stated, dictated by dramatic considerations, although the four stanzas can, and do, stand out as an individual lyric poem. There are no such dramatic exigencies in the poem which, as Schadewaldt has shown<sup>73</sup>, bears very close parallels in form, in imagery and in content to the elves' chorus in Faust. Dämmerung senkte sich von oben covers the period of time from evening to full night which is covered by the Serenade and the Notturmo of the Elfenszene:

Dämmerung senkte sich von oben,  
Schon ist alle Nähe fern;  
Doch zuerst emporgehoben  
Holden Lichts der Abendstern!  
Alles schwankt ins Ungewisse  
Nebel streifen in die Höh;  
Schwarzvertiefte Finsternisse  
Widerspiegelnd ruht der See.



Nun im östlichen Bereiche  
 Ahn ich Mondenglanz und -glut,  
 Schlanker Weiden Haargezweige  
 Scherzen auf der nächsten Flut.  
 Durch bewegter Schatten Spiele  
 Zittert Lunas Zauberschein,  
 Und durchs Auge schleicht die Kühle  
 Sänftigend ins Herz hinein.

This poem from the Chinesisch-deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten is remarkable in its series of juxtaposed visual images, and the delicacy with which the poet uses the images to achieve his effect<sup>74</sup>. It is, indeed, like a Chinese print in the enumeration of its images one after the other, not organically connected either by context or syntax. This is the principal difference in structure between this poem and the Notturmo of the elves' chorus; the motifs are so similar that it can hardly be doubted that they are closely related in time and conception. The metre is identical; but whereas the Notturmo has a vertical progression, so to speak, each image developing organically from the previous one (night, stars, sparks, lake, reflection, sky, peace, moon), in the other the images are firmly placed within the strict context of the couplet to which they belong (Dämmerung; Abendstern; Nebel; See; Mond; Weiden, etc.). The other striking difference between the poems is that in Dämmerung senkte sich the visual element dominates throughout until the final couplet,



when the effect of the natural scene on the feelings of the poet is expressed -- and even here, as Viëtor points out<sup>75</sup>, the imaginative effect is expressed in visual terms:

Und durchs Auge schleicht die Kühle  
Sänftigend ins Herz hinein.

If we are to see this poem as representative of the Chinesisch-deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten at all -- and some critics have been unwilling to do so<sup>76</sup> -- it is this visual delicacy and plastic juxtaposition that betrays its Far-Eastern inspiration. It is true, as Staiger points out, that in this collection there is no such intimate relationship with the East as there had been in the case of the West-Östliche Divan: "... von einer Begegnung mit einem großen Meister wie Hafiz ist hier keine Rede. Es bleibt bei einer leichten Kostümierung mit fern-östlichen Dingen und einem ungewohnten, an Farbenholzschnitte erinnernden Kolorit" <sup>77</sup>. And yet not only the arrangement of the images in separate couplets, but the images themselves, contribute in part to this effect: the "schlanker Weiden Haar-gezweige" and the "Zauberschein" of the moon on water are conventional stylistic motifs of Chinese and Japanese decorative art<sup>78</sup>. That Goethe derived this image from visual rather than literary sources is not



clear; it could be the result of Goethe's reading of Far-Eastern poets, but it seems unlikely that it is a result of his reading of the novel Chinese Courtship which had appeared in England in 1824. He remarked about this book to Eckermann: "Vom Mond ist viel die Rede, allein er verändert die Landschaft nicht, sein Schein ist so helle gedacht wie der Tag selber" 79 -- a remark which hardly describes the image as it appears in this poem.

Apart from its Chinese characteristics, however, the poem is representative enough of Goethe's late lyrics -- more so, indeed, than it indicates any Chinese influence, as is seen from its close relationship with the elves' chorus, which has no trace of Far-Eastern sources or influences. It is yet another expression of the light-symbolism of Goethe's later poems, the image of light breaking through darkness, the progressive enlightenment which had formed the basic structure of Um Mitternacht. In the dusk, the first sign of light is the evening star, which promises light, but still leaves darkness dominant: "Alles schwankt ins Ungewisse". The lake reflects not light, but "schwarzvertiefte Finsternisse", again doubly black in reflection. With the second stanza, the promise of the evening star is fulfilled, and a note of expectation, of hope, is sounded



in the first couplet:

Nun im östlichen Bereiche  
Ahn ich Mondenglanz und -glut.

The scenery dissolves into "ein Spielend-Dekoratives", in contrast to the sombre, dim and uncertain mood of the first stanza, and the final couplet expresses in a tactile image the effect of the welcomed moonlight:

Und durchs Auge schleicht die Kühle  
Sänftigend ins Herz hinein.

And once again an idea which had in the early works been associated by Goethe with the effect of moonlight recurs in the nature-lyric of his old age; for years Goethe had not alluded to the "coolness" of moonlight since the time he used the association in various contexts and to varying effect<sup>80</sup>. Here the coolness of moonlight is the relaxation and peace which the poet feels in the light of the moon, which is once again closely associated with the water from which it traditionally derives, in part, its cooling properties; and significantly, it is through the eye that the effect of moonlight on the sensibility of the poet is felt -- it is perceived in visual rather than imaginative terms.

With the progression from dark to light, from doubt and uncertainty to clarity and calm, the poem ends.



The tensions of the first stanza are fully resolved in terms of the second, in terms of moonlight<sup>81</sup>.

Whereas in the elves' chorus the peace of the Notturmo must give way to the imperative, agitated exhortation of the Mattutino and Réveil, the pure lyric poem ends with the image of fulfilled peace. The imagery and theme of the Elfenszene are dependent on the dramatic action -- Faust, having bathed "in Tau aus Lothes Flut" can now "gestärkt dem Tag entgegenruhn". This difference between the lyrical and dramatic treatment of what is virtually the same theme does not affect the language of the two passages itself -- the four vigils of the chorus can be considered as a lyric poem just as much as Dämmerung senkte sich. The difference lies in the fact that the dramatic passage must be explained in terms which go beyond the immediate context of the four stanzas themselves, whereas the lyric poem can be interpreted solely on its own terms. Thus the conclusion of Dämmerung senkte sich is the final summing-up of the whole poem; it shows the organic development of the subjective effect from the natural scene. In the Elfenszene, however, we are prepared beforehand in Ariel's speech for the peace and rest which Faust is to experience; and the full meaning and significance of the four vigils of the chorus is only revealed in



the light of this immediate context within the scene itself, and further within the wider context of the whole play, of Faust's mission in the second part <sup>82</sup>. With this difference of context goes a difference in the interpretation of the symbolism of the imagery; whereas in the Elfenszene it is the sun that stands representative of hope and fulfilment -- though, for Faust, frustrated hope in the face of the "Flammen-übermaß" --, and whereas the moon is a means, an agent and symbol of peace and regeneration which prepares Faust for the day, in the lyric poem the moon is the final symbol of hope and expectation fulfilled; and though such a delicate poem will not stand up to any deeply symbolic interpretation, it is with this image of fulfilment that the poem ends.

Among Goethe's late lyrics, we have dealt directly with five poems, all of which have as an important and organic part of their imagery, in one form or another, the symbolism of light; Um Mitternacht and Dämmerung senkte sich were purely nocturnal lyrics, where moon and starlight featured, with slightly varying symbolic overtones, against a background of night and darkness. In Der Bräutigam, the time-basis of twenty-four hours from midnight to midnight included the day, and more



specifically the sun, in its symbolic framework as the image of promise and reassurance. The other two poems balanced the nocturnal stanzas with stanzas in which the imagery of day and sunlight dominated -- one, the elves' chorus, integrally and necessarily, due as much to dramatic considerations as to those of lyrical unity; and the other, Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen, in an inconsequential and slightly incongruous way -- the first stanza has a more real thematic and formal connexion with the pure nature-lyrics than with its own dry "daytime" companion-piece in the Zahme Xenien.

This day-night, or sun-moon polarity is found one last time in the two poems Goethe wrote in Dornburg in the late summer of 1828, the one his last moon-lyric, the other a lyric of the early morning:

Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde

Willst du mich sogleich verlassen?  
Warst im Augenblick so nah!  
Dich umfinstern Wolkenmassen,  
Und nun bist du gar nicht da.

Doch du fühlst, wie ich betrübt bin,  
Blickt dein Rand herauf als Stern!  
Zeugest mir, daß ich geliebt bin,  
Sei das Liebchen noch so fern.

So hinan denn! hell und heller,  
Reiner Bahn, in voller Pracht!  
Schlägt mein Herz auch schmerzlich schneller,  
Überselig ist die Nacht.

(Dornburg, 25th August, 1828)



Früh, wenn Tal, Gebirg und Garten  
 Nebelschleiern sich enthüllen,  
 Und dem sehnlichsten Erwarten  
 Blumenkelche bunt sich füllen;

Wenn der Äther, Wolken tragend,  
 Mit dem klaren Tage streitet,  
 Und ein Ostwind, sie verjagend,  
 Blaue Sonnenbahn bereitet;

Dankst du dann, am Blick dich weidend,  
 Reiner Brust der Großen, Holden,  
 Wird die Sonne, rötlich scheidend,  
 Rings den Horizont vergolden.

(Dornburg, September 1828)

We can first, as Schadewaldt has done for Dämmerung senkte sich and the elves' chorus, enumerate the motifs and expressions which the two poems have in common -- but in this case more for the purposes of contrast than those of comparison. The common central image is one of light -- but in the one moonlight and in the other sunlight; in both poems the light is obscured at first, by "Wolkenmassen" in the one, by mist and cloud in the other; in both clear light triumphs eventually, exuberantly and affirmatively greeted in the moon-lyric, more quietly, gratefully in the sun-lyric. In both there is the same expectant, almost apprehensive waiting for light to reveal itself, and in both there is a reference to the orbits of the two bodies: "Reiner Bahn" and "Blaue Sonnenbahn". Here, however, the similarities end; the metre, slightly but significantly different, gives the moon-lyric a quiet, inward-looking



note, and is used to grandiose effect in the last stanza, whereas in the second lyric the mood of the even lines, all with a rising cadence on the last syllable, distinguishes it from the other in a lighter, more mouvementé rhythm.

The first task is to free the poems from their biographical contexts; it is true that Goethe had retired to Dornburg to recover from --, or, as less kind critics have it, to escape from the funeral arrangements surrounding -- the death of Karl-August. It is also true that on the same night of the full moon as Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde was written, Goethe's thoughts had turned to Marianne von Willemer and the lines from the Vollmondnacht of the Divan, as we know from his letters<sup>83</sup>. It is further true that he had, during his stay in Dornburg, studied the weather and the cloud-formations with particular interest, as he tells Zelter in his letters<sup>84</sup>. And to his son he writes on 24th June of the same year:

... Nun steht der Mond in voller  
Pracht am östlichen Himmel (WA.IV.44.221).

All this tells us, as does Baumgart, "daß das Gedicht vom 25. August, und ganz besonders das zweite, vom September 1828, der unmittelbaren Wahrnehmung des Dichters entsprangen"<sup>85</sup>, it is also true, however, as



Baumgart admits, that this explains only the "Äußere Beschaffenheit" of the poem. Goethe had already used the moon as a tryst more explicitly than in this poem; he had already described "des Mondes volle Pracht" in the Eastern sky in Dämmerung senkte sich and in the elves' chorus of Faust II; and his mist and cloud-imagery had already been used with more consciously symbolic purpose than here in earlier works<sup>86</sup> -- Howards Ehrengedächtnis, in which Goethe uses his meteorological knowledge and observation to construct a whole series of symbolic cloud-formations, was written eight years before the Dornburger Mondlied.

Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde may be, as Korff puts it, "das letzte ganz persönliche, aber alles zusammenfassende Wort des Lyrikers Goethe"<sup>87</sup>, but it is in its imagery and application so general, and so far removed in its meaning from the immediate natural impression that we cannot interpret it in any but the most general terms<sup>88</sup>. The poem has the same progression from dark to light as Um Mitternacht and Dämmerung senkte sich -- but here it is not the stars or Northern Lights, but the moon alone which comprises the imagery of light. As in the earlier An den Mond, the natural scene throws its reflection into the "inscape" of the mind, and here as there no conscious analogy is drawn, there is no



deliberately pointed symbolising, the poem expresses a full and harmonious response of the state of mind to the state of nature. In so far as the moon is a symbol here -- and it certainly has deep symbolic association<sup>89</sup>, in spite of the fact that it is nowhere forced in on the reader's consciousness -- it is on the one hand a function of the immediate context of the poem, and on the other a distillation of the more general associations which the moon has had for the poet as we have seen it in the perspective of his development. The poet appeals to the moon, obscured behind cloud, greets its appearance as a "star" promising the fuller light to come -- in the same way as the stars had heralded full moonlight in Um Mitternacht, Dämmerung senkte sich and the Notturmo of the elves' chorus -- until finally the familiar "diapason" note appears in the last stanza with the grandiose and affirmative assertion of faith:

So hinan denn! Hell und heller,  
Reiner Bahn, in voller Pracht!  
Schlägt mein Herz auch schmerzlich schneller,  
Überselig ist die Nacht.

With this last stanza, the religious note of so many of Goethe's late lyrics reaches one of its last and fullest expressions; and though we must be careful not to lay too literal an emphasis on the meanings of



the word "überselig" in the final line<sup>90</sup> -- Goethe had already used the word in a similar context, but with no evident religious association<sup>91</sup> -- yet the last stanza of the Dornburger Mondlied, with its metrical form, its appeals and affirmations, and its absolute genitive construction, "reiner Bahn", comes closer to hymn-form than any of Goethe's pure lyric poems. And the whole progression of moon in the three stanzas, characterised by Viëtor as: "Trost, Hoffnung, Glaube, Seligkeit -- in dieser Steigerung begleitet die Seele das Wachsen des Mondlichts" <sup>92</sup>, are moods associated more than anything with religious devotion.

This poem cannot, however, be interpreted in exclusively or even predominantly religious terms, however the word "religious" may be defined; for the poem remains a nature-lyric as much as An den Mond was one, and as such very much a product of Goethe's own perception and thinking. Between the Weimarer Mondlied and this last moon-lyric lies a considerable distance -- a distance of more than forty years, and all the distance which that space of time implies for someone whose development ranged as widely as Goethe's. The Dornburger Mondlied has none of the ambiguous twilight of the early Weimar poem, either in the perception of nature or in the response of the poet; the unconscious suggest-



ion of the "Nebelglanz", the poet's intermediate position between "Freud und Schmerz", between "froh- und trüber Zeit" contrasts with the clear opposition of light and dark in the later lyric; the crisis of the Weimarer Mondlied, the panic of the middle stanzas, is more real and less fanciful than the anxious note of the first stanza of Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde; and there is no elegiac retrospect in the latter, only forward-looking. Yet the progression of the two poems is not so very different: from uneasy apprehension to hope, and from hope to affirmation, in the one affirmation of withdrawal into companionship and the "Labyrinth der Brust", reflecting the vague contours of misty moonlight, and in the other unreserved affirmation of full moonlight in the midst of darkness -- both expressed in the same term: "Selig -- Überselig".

With the return of the image of the moon to Goethe's late lyrics comes a return to the relationship between the poet and nature of the early Weimar years. Since An den Mond, the moon had been for Goethe variously an element in the Italian nocturnal landscape, an analogy for the insecure, introverted state of mind of the poet in Tasso, a mythological personification in Iphigenie, an object of scientific interest and curiosity in the



decades 1790-1810, a tryst for the lovers Hatem and Suleika, and an allegory of their relationship. In his late lyrics, and especially in this last Mondlied, Goethe returns to the moon as a truly lyrical nature-image; as in the Weimar moon-lyric, the inner state of the poet observes and reflects the state of nature, the obscuring and the re-emergence of moonlight, and finds in the natural scene a reflection of and a symbol for his personal feelings. As in the earlier poem, perhaps less immediately and more consciously, with more deliberate effect, the poet responds to the metaphorical potential of the natural scene, and finds in the effect of moonlight and in the image of the moon itself expression, not simply for a specific state of mind, but for a more generally valid statement of faith. It is a different moon, a clear full moon, to which Goethe turns in his old age for some of his final lyrical expression, but it is the same "schöner, stiller Gefährt der Nacht"<sup>93</sup>. And in the loneliest winter of his life, after the final lyrical output of 1828, his thoughts turn often enough towards the moon; in his letters to the Willemsers<sup>94</sup>, and finally in a letter to Zelter on 12th February, 1829:

Gegenwärtiges dictir ich Abends  
um acht Uhr, durch die anfrierenden



Fensterscheiben in meinen schneebedeckten  
mondbeschienenen Garten hinausblickend.  
Einsame Abende kann ich jetzt genug  
genießen ... (WA.IV.45.160).



## Chapter Six

### Die Klassische Walpurgisnacht



More than any other of Goethe's works, with the possible exception of the Märchen, Faust II bears out and illustrates his own remarks on symbolism, on the inexhaustibility and inaccessibility of the true poetic symbol to full conceptual analysis and interpretation<sup>1</sup>; and within the second part of Faust itself, it is the Klassische Walpurgisnacht that presents the most baffling and many-sided symbolism to be found in the work. It is Faust II, and more particularly the second act, that has attracted the attention above all of research into motif and symbol, whether based on "intrinsic" or "extrinsic", on literary analytical or psycho-analytical criteria<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, of all Goethe's works, the Klassische Walpurgisnacht and the Märchen seem likely to remain the most "inkommensurabel und für den Verstand unfasslich"<sup>3</sup>, in spite of the vast amount of scholarly and imaginative work that has been devoted to them, particularly during the last two decades or so.

It is perhaps in view of the very impossibility of any definitive or exhaustive interpretation of the symbolism of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht that Emil Staiger points out that a reading of this part of the drama, the most "philological" of all Goethe's works<sup>4</sup>,



must not only take into account the single details of the mass of symbol and allegory, or even of the specifically dramatic or lyrical elements which go to make up the whole "phantasmagoria" of the act, but that the reader will come closer to the intentions of the author if he allows himself above all to be carried along by the dynamic general movement of the episode, which is at times dramatic, at times symbolical or allegorical, at times apparently wilful and ironical, but always a forward and upward development towards its culmination in the emergence of form and beauty in the final Meerfest:

"... Wir handeln demnach im Sinne des Dichters, wenn wir nicht peinlich auf den mühsam gedeuteten Einzelheiten bestehen, sondern alles wieder versenken in das Gewoge von Nacht und Mondlicht, Ungeheuern und Halbgestalten, gärenden Elementen und wandelbaren vorolympischen Göttern. Dann werden wir erschüttert, aber nicht taumelnd, in hohen gefasten Entzücken die allberwingende Schöne sehen, die schließlich aus dem Tumult hervorgeht und sich verdichtet zu reinen Konturen, beschwichtigt zu schwebendem Gleichgewicht" <sup>5</sup>.

Clearly, however, before one can give oneself up to this "Gewoge von Nacht und Mondlicht", some attempt must be made to explain and analyse the Klassische Wal-



Waldrausch in detail as well as in general terms -- and here in particular to examine the nature and significance of the moonlight which shines more and more brightly over the scene as the act progresses.

Many critics, and indeed Goethe himself, have indicated that the Klassische Waldrusch, and the second act as a whole, must be seen in terms of the following act, of the Helena-Akt, as the most important part of "Helenas Antekedenzien"<sup>6</sup>. However, the final version of these "Antekedenzien", written between January and June 1830, differs considerably from the original plans of 1826 -- as does the final version of the Helena-Akt itself<sup>7</sup>. This change is summed up by Erich Trunz as the shift of emphasis from a dramatic to a symbolical structure in the Klassische Waldrusch<sup>8</sup>; where the original draft included, for example, Faust's descent to Hades and his petition to Persephone for the return of Helen to the world above, in the final version this was considered by Goethe to be no longer necessary -- in its place, the Meerfest scene is the symbolic representation of the whole process of "das Ins-Leben-Ziehen des Schönen"<sup>9</sup>. Helen was not to appear simply as the result of Faust's petition, not as an eidolon, as she had been invoked in the first act, but as the natural and organic product of a whole process of careful preparation in the



symbolic development of the second act; as Goethe put it to Zelter, "damit Helena als dritter Akt sich ganz ungerungen anschliesse, und, genugsam vorbereitet, nicht mehr phantasmagorisch und eingeschoben, sondern in aesthetisch-vernunftmässiger Folge sich erweisen könnte ..."; "Helena tritt nicht als Zwischenspielerin, sondern als Heroine, ohne weiteres auf" (To Zelter, 24th January, 1828; WA.IV.43.262; and 4th January, 1831; WA.IV.48.72).

This "aesthetically logical" appearance of Helen in the third act is a very different notion from the 1826 plan for the Helena episode as a "klassisch-romantische Phantasmagorie"; indeed, it would seem that any phantasmagorical elements have been transferred from the Helena episode to the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, which now becomes, in the final version, a preparation for the appearance of the heroine as "das letzte Produkt der sich immer steigenden Natur" <sup>10</sup>. Her appearance now follows directly on the culmination of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht in the Meerfest scene; for just as the highest ideal of classical beauty was not the sudden and magical appearance of a phantom, or eidolon, but the result of a long and organic process of evolution and metamorphosis, so now Faust must undergo this "innere Märchen" <sup>11</sup>, a formative process of education to the



highest manifestation of beauty<sup>12</sup> -- a process of the evolution of form out of chaos, of beauty and perfection from formlessness, of light from dark. And it is against this mythical, symbolic background that the scene for Helena's entry is set after the appearance of her mythical counterpart, Galatea:

"Das ganze Gewirr der klassischen Walpurgisnacht ist ... Folie der Gestalt, die dann, 'noch immer trunken von des Gewoges regsamem Geschaukel', hellenischen Boden betreten und sich zu reinen Konturen festigen wird ... die klassische Walpurgisnacht aus gewürdigt werden als berückender, dämmernder Hintergrund, aus dem zum Unris zu gelangen, der Künstler unablässig strebt" <sup>13</sup>.

With the recasting, or rather this shift of emphasis, of the final version of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, no strictly dramatic introduction for Helena was necessary. There was no need for a picaresque journey to Hell, and no need for Faust's heart-rending appeal to Persephone -- the difficulties of which Goethe fully appreciated<sup>14</sup>. Helena should appear as "wahr", as "wahrhaft-lebendig" <sup>15</sup>, and Goethe himself was quite aware that in the final version of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht no further introduction was needed for her after the Meerfest: "... das nach einem solchen hymn-



ischen Gipfel, nach dieser innersten Offenbarung der Bildungsgesetze des Schönen eine nochmalige äußere Beschwörung der Schönheit poetisch nicht mehr tragbar war, geht fraglos aus dem Bewegungsgesetz dieses Aktes hervor: Weder eine Steigerung noch eine neu einsetzende Kontrastszene war hier dichterisch möglich oder motivisch notwendig. Helena mußte sofort sichtbar erscheinen, nachdem sämtliche Schichten, Elemente, Voraussetzungen und Seinsformen des Schönen sich in einem einzigen, 'ungeheuren', dichtungsgeschichtlichen Werdeprozeß dargestellt hatten" <sup>16</sup>.

It is, then, with the Klassische Walpurgisnacht seen very much as the "Antesedenzen zu Helena" that we can approach the closer examination of the rôle played by the image of the moon in the episode, which is clearly a considerable one. The moon accompanies the action from the very beginning, when Erichtho's vision of tents and legions fades and disappears under the light of the rising moon; it lights up Manto's "ewigen Tempel"; it is ceremonially invoked by Anaxagoras in the Wahnhafter Mondsturz scene; and finally it emerges as one of the central motifs, as the presiding deity, "im Zenith verharrend", of the Aegean Meerfest with which the act closes. It is a symbol which here assumes many-sided and far-reaching implications -- it is more heavily charged with



meaning and association here than it has been in any other of Goethe's works; and at the same time, as we shall see, it represents the Summa Summarum, the distillation of many of the previous associations and meanings which the image of the moon had had for Goethe in the course of his creative career, and which it has been the purpose of this thesis to define and analyse. The most suitable method of examining the various associations and meanings of the moon-image here will be to trace its appearance and its functions as it occurs progressively through the Klassische Walpurgisnacht; but I should like to preface this with some more general remarks on the rôle of the moon in the episode.

Commentators have frequently pointed out the polarities which run through the Klassische Walpurgisnacht; more, perhaps, than any other of Goethe's works, the second and third acts of Faust II are concerned with the union of opposites, with the dynamic fusion of polarities which is one of the "grossen Triebkräfte aller Natur" <sup>17</sup>. These polarities include the opposing but complementary elements of Romantic and Classical, Nordic and Meridional, Gothic and Hellenic, Ancient and Modern; the opposition of Faust and Mephisto, which here takes on wider implications than in their previous rôles as man and tempter: here, on Greek ground, Mephisto can



no longer maintain his traditional rôle as tempter to sin, which is a function of his post-Christian, Northern context. Sin and shame have no meaning in the ancient world, and so he must assume another form of negation in counterpointing Faust's quest for absolute beauty with his own quest for absolute ugliness, which he discovers, to his own horror, in the Phorkyids. The vulcanist-neptunist conflict runs through the whole episode, not only in its geophysical implications, but in its social and political symbolism (or rather, perhaps, allegory), and in the elemental opposition of earth and water and of the beasts and figures which belong respectively to these elements: Sphinxes, Gryphons, Ants, Pygmies, etc., on the one hand, and Nereids, Tritons, Nymphs and the Meerwunder on the other. Time and timelessness, history and myth, are set against each other in the contrast between the battle of Pharsalus and the mythical Walpurgisnacht, in the meeting of Chiron and Manto; and the act ends with the triumphant fusion of the elements, with the triumph over polarity represented in the final chorus.

There is, however, a wider polarity than those contained within the Klassische Walpurgisnacht itself, namely the polarity of Acts two and three as a whole, which can be generally characterised as the polarity of







Harrend auf des Morgens Wonne,  
 Östlich spähend ihren Lauf.  
 Ging auf einmal mir die Sonne  
 Wunderbar im Süden auf ...

Aug und Brust ihr zugewendet,  
 Sag ich an den milden Glanz;  
 Diese Schönheit, wie sie blendet,  
 Blendete mich Armen ganz.  
 (vv. 9222-5 & 9238-41).

The polarity of sun and moon, day and night, is by no means new in Goethe's works; it has been used in different contexts with varying associations<sup>20</sup>, but nowhere in such broad terms as here, where the two acts of the drama stand respectively under the aegis of the moon and the sun. Moreover, the sun is also represented within the Klassische Walpurgisnacht itself, as if to herald its appearance in the following act: not the sun itself, however, but the Telchinen von Rhodus, appear as envoys to the festival of Apollo's sister Luna. This very general polarity of sun and moon in the two acts does not by any means explain the whole structure and significance of the acts themselves, nor their full relationship to each other; it is, however, an integral and important element in the polarities which run through them both, and which at two points in each seem to reach their consummate union: in Act II in the conclusion of the Meerfest, and in Act III in the union of Faust and Helena in Aroadia. We can now turn to a



more specific and detailed analysis of the image of the moon within the Klassische Walpurgisnacht itself.

The Klassische Walpurgisnacht opens with a prologue spoken by the sorceress Erichtho, who evokes in classical trimeters not the mythical aspect of classical antiquity, not the timeless world of spirits which is the true milieu of the Walpurgisnacht, but the historical, zeit-gebunden aspect of the ancient world, represented here in the Battle of Pharsalus, which for the historian marks the end of the republican democratic tradition of Greek politics and the beginning of despotic Roman imperialism. Erichtho promises a "Schauderfest" -- a revival of the battle itself, not a revival of the timeless Walpurgisnacht; and these two aspects are a feature of the polarities of history and myth, of transience and permanence which will recur throughout the act, until the historical element eventually fades and gives way to the true archaic and ahistorical spirit of antiquity which is represented by the light of the moon<sup>21</sup>.

So now, as the moon rises over the scene of the battle, "unvollkommen, aber leuchtend hell", the historical scene, "der Zelten Trug", fades and disappears, to give way to the "seltnen Wunderglanz der Nacht" in which the true mythical world is to be recreated.



We know from the draft of 1826 that the "unvollkommene" moon is in fact a waning gibbous moon<sup>22</sup> -- a curious feature of the otherwise clear and bright moon of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht. This is puzzling, and no definitive explanation seems to suggest itself, since Goethe gives no indication, even implicitly, why this should be a waning moon. It could simply be a parallel in the second Walpurgisnacht to the first one on the Blockberg, where the similarly "unvollkommene Scheibe" of the late moon cast a dim and mournful light over the grotesque scene (vv. 3851ff); but whereas there the moon shone "schlecht", "traurig", here, on the contrary, it shines brightly -- like the moon of the Italian landscapes.

This waning moon could, however, indicate on the one hand that the whole world of pre-Olympian, archaic Mediterranean myth with which the moon is associated in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is itself doomed, in spite of its timeless validity, to be superseded in men's consciousness, i.e. historically, by other mythological systems, by the Greek Olympian gods, which in turn will give way to Roman, Christian and other deities<sup>23</sup>. Or on the other hand it is perhaps also an indication that within the context of the drama itself, the lunar sphere of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, the whole unconscious element, the series of fantastic creatures, of demigods



and divinities, will itself wane and give way to the bright sunlight of the Helena-Akt.

The significance of the moon as the presiding deity and source of light in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is compounded of many elements, some of which are already familiar to us as associations of the image from Goethe's earlier works in different contexts. The moon had already long been associated with the world of spirits and fantasy, with ethereal, disembodied form and vague contours<sup>24</sup>, and among the very earliest associations of the moon were those of spirits and moonlight<sup>25</sup>, so now the moon reigns over the spirit-world of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht. And the moon had already evoked for Goethe the mysterious Magie of the night, in his final moonlight walk through Rome, in lyric poems such as An den Mond and Vollmondnacht; above all in the skating scene in Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren, it was the moon reflected in the frozen surface of the lake that "vollendete das Magische der Umgebung" and threw forms, perceptions and feelings into confusion<sup>26</sup>. So, too, in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, the light of the moon, "ein Trümmenlicht, das milden, aber unwahrscheinlichen Glanz verbreitet ... ist verwirrend und entbindet die Magie der Phantasie, die keine Grenzen kennt und die Person zu überwältigen droht ..." <sup>27</sup>.



These are by no means the only or the most significant antecedents in Goethe's works for the image of the moon as it appears in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht. In Italy, he had noted how the effect of moonlight and torchlight by night enhanced the marble statues and the clean, classical outlines of the buildings and monuments<sup>28</sup>, and particularly in his last impressions of Rome during a moonlit night, the epitome of his Italian experience, he had described how the moonlight shining on the Coliseum had evoked a "Schauer" of mystery and apprehension, how by moonlight "die sonst so bekannten Gegenstände fremdartig und geisterhaft erscheinen", and how the "Zauber" of moonlight had induced in him "einen Zustand wie von einer andern einfachern größern Welt"<sup>29</sup>. It is this effect of moonlight, which evokes the figures of the ancient world, and which reveals the inner spirit of antiquity as well as "der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten", that Faust evokes in the Wald und Höhle scene; and it is the moonlight which now, in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, similarly serves as "ein poetisches Mittel, das 'Innere' der Antike, ihre ewige Lebendigkeit groß und gewaltig zur Darstellung zu bringen ..."; it is the element "durch welche das Absolute der Antike aus der im Realen geborgenen Erscheinung heraustritt ins grenzenlos Absolute"<sup>30</sup>.



This "absolute", "inner" quality of the classical world as we see it in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht has little enough in common with the traditional notions of Winckelmannian neo-classicism; this mythical ancient world is more in the spirit of the Romantic mythologists, of Creuzer, Görres and Schelling, on whose work Goethe drew for much of the material in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, in spite of his general scepticism towards their theories<sup>31</sup>. It is the dark world of archaic, pre-Homeric, pre-Olympian myth that he evokes here, not the exemplary formal spirit of high classicism<sup>32</sup>.

This "Romantic" element in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, which consists in the vision of pre-classical material through a modern, Nordic imagination, is closely associated with the image of the moon, and in this respect Goethe's use of the image has very close Romantic parallels. For the German Romantics, the moon was the image associated above all with the fantasy and the poetic imagination, as opposed to the sphere of conscious reason frequently symbolised by the sun<sup>33</sup>. Indeed, in the following passage from Heinrich von Ofterdingen, for example, the moon has a very similar function to that in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, in that it also releases the fantasy of the imagination and evokes the inner "Traumwelt" of a "fabelhaften Urzeit" in its



reflected, unearthly light:

Der Mond stand in mildem Glanze  
über den Hügeln, und ließ wunderliche  
Träume in allen Kreaturen aufsteigen.  
Selbst wie ein Traum der Sonne, lag er  
über der in sich gekehrten Traumwelt,  
und führte die in unzählige Grenzen  
geteilte Natur in jene fabelhafte  
Urzeit zurück, wo jeder Keim noch für  
sich schlummerte, und einsam und un-  
berührt sich vergeblich sehnte, die  
dunkle Fülle seines unermesslichen Daseins  
zu entfalten. In Heinrichs Gemüt  
spiegelte sich das Märchen des Abends ... 34.

Clearly, the moonlight in the Klassische Walpurgis-  
nacht does not exclusively represent the Romantic el-  
ement in the episode, and equally clearly, the associa-  
tions of the symbol as it is used by Goethe are far  
more profound and far-reaching than those of the Romantic  
writers, for whom the moon is a stock-in-trade Stimmungsmittel or leitmotiv. However, there are two further  
points which indicate that the moonlight is closely  
related to the Romantic spirit in Goethe's mind: one  
is the Romantic, musical element of the rhymed verse of  
the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, and the other is the very  
close relationship throughout the episode between the  
moon and the Sirens.

Before the moon rises at the beginning of the scene,  
the metre and language of Erichtho's monologue is strictly  
classical, consisting of unrhymed trimeters. When



this "historical" element fades, however, with the rise of the moon and the beginning of the mythical revival of the ancient world, the verse-form gives way to rhymed, less regular and less classical rhythms. This rhyme represents for Goethe, as we know from the symbolic prosody of Faust and Helen in Act III (vv. 9365ff), the Nordic, Gothic, Romantic element as opposed to the Southern, Hellenic, Classical element. And it is rhyme which makes its appearance in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht simultaneously with the moon and its "inner" light -- as Staiger points out: "Der Innenraum, das Mondlicht über der Szene, erfordert, obwohl wir in Griechenland sind, nach Goethes Begriffen den Reim ... So gut wie das Geisterlicht über der Szene, die unzuverlässige Realität, der Wechsel der Perspektive, und die unübersehbare schwankende Landschaft gehören auch die schmeichelnden Reime zu Helenas Antezedenzen, zu dem vagen Hintergrund, aus dem die Königin strahlend hervortreten wird" 35.

Not only the rhymes of the verse used in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, however, represent the romantic element in a classical (or pre-classical) context. The highly musical and suggestive sound of much of the verse is very much more akin to the "musicality" of Tieck's or Brentano's verse than to anything in the class-



local idiom<sup>36</sup>; and it is above all in the songs addressed by the Sirens to the moon that this musical element is found.

The rôle of the Sirens in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is a curious one; their real stature and function emerges only in the Meerfest, though they are present almost from the very beginning, "präludierend oben" above the Sphinxes and Gryphons in the first scene Am oberen Pandlos. Here, however, they are in a foreign element; this scene belongs properly to the element of earth, that of the Sphinxes, Gryphons, Ants and Pygmies, to the seismic-vulcanist element -- and the Sirens here play a negative rôle. Their "Singsang" is derided by the Sphinxes, and for Mephisto the "Trallern" is familiar, but unpleasant:

Das sind die saubern Neuigkeiten,  
 Wo aus der Kehle, von den Saiten  
 Ein Ton sich um den andern flieht.  
 Des Trallern ist bei mir verloren:  
 Es krabbelt wohl mir um die Ohren,  
 Allein zum Herzen dringt es nicht ... 37  
 (vv. 7172-7)

Yet it is significant that Mephisto should be able to recognise and analyse the nature of the Sirens' song more perceptively than the Sphinxes can, who belong exclusively to the Meridional world, and that the "Singsang" should at least be familiar to him. For Mephisto, as Erich points out, is here the representative (albeit



a negative one) of the Nordic, Romantic world<sup>38</sup>. And it is the song of the Sirens that represents the modern, Romantic musical verse, which "krabbelt wohl um die Ohren", in which "ein Ton sich um den andern flieht", and which is amply exemplified in their later hymns to Luna<sup>39</sup>; indeed, it is possible that it is just the kind of lyric poetry expressed in Tieck's and Brentano's "musical moonlight" that Goethe is alluding to here<sup>40</sup>.

However, the rôle of the Sirens is a negative one only in this first part of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht; as the episode progresses, and as the "moonlight" element, which is more properly that of the Sirens, emerges as the dominant one, so too they assume a more positive rôle in the action. In the Meerfest scene they are no longer "Verführerinnen" but "Führerinnen"<sup>41</sup>; they not only summon the guests to the "seeisch-heitern Feste" (vv. 7509ff), but they also accompany the whole action of the scene, hymning the deities and commenting on the action as a chorus, explaining and introducing the sea-creatures as they make their appearance. And above all they hymn Luna, under whose aegis the Meerfest is held, and with whom they have a special relationship.

We shall deal in more detail with the Sirens' song in the Meerfest scene later; for the moment, these remarks will be sufficient to show that not only the



Romantic element of rhyme and musical assonance, but also the representatives of Romantic lyricism, the Sirens, are closely associated with the moon and moonlight in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, and that the image of the moon here has something in common with the associations it had for the Romantic poets. Thus, while the symbol of the moon as it appears in the episode as a whole is by no means adequately explained in all its functions by its simple equation with the Romantic as opposed to the Hellenic/Classical element -- we have already seen how the moon had been associated for Goethe in Italy with the spirit of Classical Antiquity -- it does seem to have this significance: that under its ghostly light the archaic, timeless world of pre-classical myth is revealed and seen, in a confused and fluid form, through the medium of the imaginative fantasy.

So the scene is set for the beginning of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht by the appearance of the moon, which also announces the arrival of the "Luftfahrer", Faust, Homunculus and Mephisto. By the light of the moon, the red light of the camp fires turns blue -- an intrusion, not particularly effective, of Goethe's Farbenlehre into his poetic work<sup>42</sup>. After this initial appearance, the moon is hardly referred to during the



first scene Am oberen Peneios and the next scene Am unteren Peneios, and takes little or no part in the action. This can be explained largely in terms of the dominant element of these scenes; in the first part of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht it is, as we have noted, the element of earth as opposed to that of water which dominates. Indeed, the whole progression of the episode is one from darkness and obscurity to "Heiterkeit" and "Schönheit", from historical Zeitgebundenheit to timeless myth, from night towards day, from earth to sea. The earthbound elements are represented above all by the Sphinxes, which have granitic permanence, and are fully conscious of the passage of time -- indeed, they are themselves the measurers of historical time:

So regeln wir die Mond- und Sonnentage.  
 Sitzen vor den Pyramiden,  
 Zu der Völker Hochgericht;  
 Überschwemmung, Krieg und Frieden -43.  
 Und verziehen kein Gesicht  
 (vv. 7244ff)

It is also represented by the Gryphons, the guardians of the treasure which belongs to the earth, its mineral wealth, and by the Ants, Pygmies and Daktyls who all constitute the inhabitants of the "vulcanist" world of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht. The moon, whose proper element is that of water, has no place here -- it is not until the Meerfest that it comes into its own element



and assumes its full significance as a symbol and as an element in the action.

There is, however, one interesting reference to moonlight in the scene between Faust, Chiron and Manto, which itself does not strictly comprise part of the elemental structure of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, being largely dramatic in its function: the first part of Faust's quest for Helena which was to be continued in the unwritten scene of the descent to Hades. In his search for Helena, Faust is aided by the centaur Chiron, who, though he himself cannot bring Faust to Helena, can at least give some account of her (vv. 7399ff), and can bring him to the sibyl Manto, who will eventually direct him to Persephone.

But Chiron and Manto, apart from being simply links in this dramatic action, guides to Faust in his quest for the shade of Helena, also have very important symbolic reference in themselves. Chiron, the restless centaur, represents the march of time, the transience and flux of the historical Zeitgeist; he is himself closely related to the horse, which was for Goethe the "Sinnbild der sinnlichen Lebenskraft", and of the impetuous onrush of time<sup>44</sup>. In contrast to Chiron, who "streift noch immer unermüdet", Manto belongs, like the Mütter, to the world of timeless myth in which most of



the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is set, and in which alone Faust can find Helena<sup>45</sup>; Manto's relationship with time is quintessentially expressed in the image of Chiron circling around her:

Ich harre, mich umkreist die Zeit.  
(v. 7481)

Thus Chiron brings Faust to the threshold of Manto's temple, which stands "bedeutend nah / Im Mondenschein"; just as the moonlight which rose on the historical scene at the beginning of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht had ushered in the timeless mythical sphere and seen the fading of historical chronology, so here Manto's temple stands timeless and apart in the light of the moon<sup>46</sup>:

Hier trotzten Rom und Griechenland im Streits,  
Peneios rechts, links den Olym zur Seite,  
Das größte Reich, das sich im Sand verliert;  
Der König flieht, der Bürger triumphiert.  
Blick auf! hier steht, bedeutend nah,  
Im Mondenschein der ewige Tempel da.  
(vv. 7465-70)

This association of the moon with the timeless element of myth in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is to reach its fullest expression in the Kaffische Fest of the final scene. Until now it has shone on the "Gewege von Nacht .... Ungeheuern und Halbgestalten"<sup>47</sup>; it has represented the Magie of moonlight as it has appeared in so many of Goethe's works; the Romantic, imaginative



element -- "das Licht der Innerlichkeit"; and the evocation of the spirit of the ancient world. Its most profound symbolic reference, which is that of suspending time and historical chronology, of transcending time in myth, has only so far been hinted at; this will only be fully realised in the Meerfest, when the earth-bound, foreign element, the disruptive "vulcanist" elements which are represented in the Thales-Anaxagoras dialectic in the second scene Am oberen Peneios have been encountered and overcome, and the way is clear to the "seeisch-heitern Feste".

But as early as the opening of the second scene Am oberen Peneios, the Sirens, who are by now beginning to assume their more positive rôle in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, announce the impending festival; they urge the "guests" away from the "schauderhaften Ort" to the watery element, to the Aegean shore, where "Luna doppelt leuchtet":

Fort! ihr edlen frohen Gäste,  
 Zu dem seeisch heitern Feste,  
 Blinkend, wo die Zitterwellen,  
 Ufernetzend, leise schwellen;  
 Da, wo Luna doppelt leuchtet,  
 Uns mit heil'gem Tau befeuchtet.  
 Dort ein freibewegtes Leben,  
 Hier ein ängstlich Erbeben;  
 Eile jeder Kluge fort!  
 Schauderhaft ist's um den Ort.  
 (vv. 7509-18)



In this preliminary description of the scene of the Meerfest are contained once again symbolic associations from the whole range of Goethe's oeuvre. The very image of the moon reflected in the "Zitterwellen" recalls at once the image of the moon reflected in water as it was found in the early Weimar years, in the reports of the second Schweizer Reise and in Der Fischer, where the moon is reflected "doppelt schöner" from the waves<sup>48</sup>. More especially, it recalls the Italian nocturnal seascapes, where the moon was described or sketched with remarkable frequency as reflected in water<sup>49</sup>.

It was suggested earlier<sup>50</sup> that during, and for some time after, the Italienische Reise, Goethe had not yet found a suitable metaphorical or symbolical application for his visual perception of the bright moon of the Italian landscape in the same way as the paler, diffuse and obscure light of the Northern moon had found its immediate metaphorical expression as a motif in the earlier lyrics and prose-works. The clear, bright Italian moon, which, as he points out, has "ein ganz anderes Geschäft als anderer Orten" (WA.I.30.266), hardly appeared in his immediately post-Italian works, and then only with relatively unimportant functions. The bright full moon reappears with the late lyrics; and again in the scene Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers



in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht he calls on his visual impressions of the Italian coastal landscape by moonlight as material for his creative work, just as he uses the moonlight in this episode as a means of evoking the spirit of the past in a similar recollection of his last night in Rome, where it conjured the impression of "einer andern, einfachern, größern Welt" 51.

However, the antecedents in Goethe's earlier works for this image of the moon reflected in the waves of the Mediterranean are not simply visual ones; there are also symbolic antecedents for this Spiegelung of the heavenly bodies in water, which we have noted as the recurrent symbolic expression of the reflection of the divine and the eternal, of the permanent cosmic order in the soul of man, the symbol for which has long been for Goethe the element of water:

Und in dem glatten See  
Weiden ihr Antlitz  
Alle Gestirne 52.

In An den Mond, in the Schweizer Reise, and much later in the Notturmo of the elves' chorus and in Dämmerung senkte sich von oben, there had been a similar relationship between the heavenly bodies and the element of water, between "dem Hin und Wider von wandelbarem irdischem und dem Wandel entrücktem himmlischem Dasein, dem Bezug



von Dauer und Wechsel" <sup>53</sup>, so here, there is a similar relationship between the divine and the sub-lunary world -- the moon, the timeless Luna, is reflected, not in the soul of man, but in the element which belongs properly to the moon, the element of water <sup>54</sup>. And the very motifs, sounds and assonances of the verses addressed to the moon, or describing the effects of the moon reflected in the waves, in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht echo some of Goethe's other moon-lyrics -- notably Dämmerung senkte sich von oben and the Notturmo of the elves' chorus, which, if we are to accept Wolfgang Schadewaldt's argument, were both written during 1827, when the second act of Faust II was also occupying Goethe's attention <sup>55</sup>:

Durch bewegter Schatten Spiele  
Zittert Lunas Zauberschein ...

Blinkend, wo die Zitter-  
wellen,

Ufernetzend, leise  
schwellen;

Da, wo Luna doppelt  
leuchtet ...

Glitzern hier im See sich  
spiegelnd.

Blicke ruhig von dem  
Bogen

Glänzen droben klarer Nacht.

Deiner Nacht auf Zitter-  
wogen

Tiefsten Ruhens Glück besiegelnd

Herrscht des Mondes volle Pracht. Mildeblitzend Glanz-  
gewinnel ...

(vv. 7511ff & 8037ff)

The "Logik der Motive" which we noted above in connexion with the late lyric from the Chinesisch-deutsche Jahres-



und Tageszeiten and the Notturmo seems to extend to these verses from the Klassische Walpurgisnacht<sup>56</sup>.

Finally, there is in the Sirens' announcement and pre-vision of the scene of the Meerfest one other very significant association which we have noted in Goethe's earlier works, namely that between the moon and dew:

Da, wo Luna doppelt leuchtet,  
Uns mit heil'gem Tau befeuchtet ...

We have seen how on three occasions, Faust's regeneration (or his desire for regeneration) has been associated very closely with the image of the moon, and how on two of these occasions, in the Urfaust monologue and in the opening scene of Faust II, it was further associated with the idea of dew as the co-agent with the moon of this baptismal process to a new life through oblivion or Lethe<sup>57</sup>; and we have also noted the archetypal and folkloric associations of water and dew, and their properties of healing and regeneration, with the moon<sup>58</sup>. So here, in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, the association of the moon with water and its "heil'gem Tau" has the significance of healing and regeneration; for the whole process of the Meerfest, of organic change and metamorphosis of forms to higher forms, of the mystery of creation and growth in the fertile element of water,



is a process of healing, a Heilsvorgang<sup>59</sup>. And it is into this "heil'gen Tau" of the moon, into the moon-reflecting waves, that Homunculus is to plunge in order to "sterben und werden", just as Faust had longed to plunge into the moonlit dew to find oblivion and a higher existence:

In deinem Thau gesund mich baden.

So the Sirens invite the "edlen frohen Gäste" to the sea-festival, to the "freibewegtes Leben", away from the upheavals and eruptions of the vulcanist element, and they go on, like heralds, to the shores of the Aegean. But before the Meerfest can begin, the earth-bound, seismic element must be dealt with; and here, too, the moon plays a curious and, in the milieu of the element foreign to it, a negative rôle in the course of the scene.

Without going into the precise details of all the symbolic and allegorical references contained in vv. 7519-7675, it is clear that the significance of this symbolism is not entirely or exclusively restricted to the sphere of geology -- that is, to the conflict of vulcanist and neptunist theories --, any more than the Thales-Anaxagoras debate is limited to a purely geophysical discussion of the origins of the world and of organic



life. Certainly, this is the basic dialectic of the argument, and it also forms the whole rubric of this second scene Am oberen Peneios. But the conflict is also a wider one; it is an elemental conflict between the spheres of earth and water, in which there are also political and social implications alongside the scientific debate -- in the struggle between the Pygmies and the Herons, and in the allegories featuring the Ants, Daktyls, Gryphons etc. It is a debate in which Goethe comes out firmly in favour of organic social, political, biological and geological development as opposed to revolutionary, spontaneous or seismic development -- although in general he is not as committedly partisan in favour of the former as is often supposed<sup>60</sup>.

The debate, or conflict, between the polarities of vulcanism and neptunism, and all the allegorical and symbolic reference implied in this conflict, is interrupted by the episode between Mephisto and the Lamiae (vv. 7676-7829), and is continued in earnest with the appearance of Homunculus with the two philosophers (vv. 7830ff). The conflicting advice given by these two to Homunculus, who here acts as a more or less objective and unbiased observer in a rather exaggerated debate between the two extreme views, is put to the test in vv. 7900ff. Anaxagoras' advice, to let



the Pygmies crown him as their king, to achieve easy, sudden success and glory among the Bergvolk of the Myrmydons, Daktyls and "andere tätig kleine Dinge", is countered by Thales' warning against violence; and indeed, Anaxagoras' advice seems to be the less reliable, since the slaughter of the aristocratic Herons by the milling hordes of Pygmies is avenged by the Kraniche des Ibykus (vv. 7884ff).

Confronted by this confounding of his advice, Anaxagoras turns from "unten" to "oben", from seismic phenomena to a quasi-divine confirmation of his beliefs; from the "Mutter Erde" which bore the Pygmies and the tiny inhabitants of the vulcanist element (vv. 7620ff), to the goddess Luna, to whom he appeals to avenge his "Volk". The succeeding events, -- the fall of a meteor from the moon -- have a certain historical reference; as Goethe knew from Diogenes Laertius<sup>61</sup>, the historical Anaxagoras, the tutor of Euripides, had foretold the fall of a meteor near Algos Potamoi, and had prophesied that it would fall from the sun. This is presumably the reason for the curious choice of Anaxagoras as representative of the vulcanist theory in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht -- though there is otherwise little enough of the historical figure in the lunatic of the Wahnhafter Mondsturz scene; moreover, it is from the



moon, not the sun, that the meteor falls:

**ANAXAGORAS nach einer Pause feierlich <sup>62</sup>.**

Konnt' ich bisher die Unterirdischen loben,  
 So wend' ich mich in diesem Fall nach oben ...  
 Du! droben ewig Unveraltete,  
 Dreinamig-Dreigestaltete,  
 Dich ruf' ich an bei meines Volkes Weh,  
 Diana, Luna, Hekate!  
 Du Brusterweiternde, im Tiefsten Sinnige,  
 Du Ruhigscheinende, Gewaltsam-Innige,  
 Eröffne deiner Schatten grausen Sohlund,  
 Die alte Nacht sei ohne Zauber kund!  
 (vv. 7900-9).

This prayer, which contrasts curiously with the wild language of Anaxagoras in the previous lines, is in the manner of an Orphic hymn, and also evidently owes something to a wide range of sources including Lucan, Hesiod and Horace, as well as to 18th century mythologists like Hederich<sup>63</sup>. Anaxagoras invokes the moon under her three names as goddess of the sky (Luna), of the earth (Diana), and of the underworld (Hecate); but it is the last, the chthonic aspect of the goddess, which is uppermost in his mind. Though some of the attributes he gives the moon -- "Brusterweiternde", "Ruhigscheinende"<sup>64</sup> -- are appropriate enough to Luna/Diana, it is rather the powers of Hecate that he invokes: the "Gewaltsam-Innige", "im Tiefsten Sinnige"; the demonic, baleful aspect of the "dreinamig-dreigestaltete" lunar trinity, the goddess Hecate, who sends madness,



delusion and illness, and who was invoked by the rites of Thessalian witches<sup>65</sup>. Appropriately, the vulcanist whose sympathies lie with seismic eruption and subterranean fissure appeals to the Queen of the Underworld: "Eröffne deiner Schatten grausen Schlund", and to assert her "alte Macht"<sup>66</sup>. And after his prayer, this invocation of the moon actually takes place in the mind of Anaxagoras himself; he has willed upon himself, it seems, the madness and delusion associated with the chthonic goddess, and in his delusion re-enacts the Thessalian rite of Mondbeschwörung, until finally, like the Zauberlehrling, he imagines that he has meddled with forces beyond his control:

Bin ich zu schnell erhört?  
 Hat mein Flehn  
 Nach jenem Höhn  
 Die Ordnung der Natur gestört?

Und größer, immer größer naht schon  
 Der Göttin rundumschriebener Thron,  
 Dem Auge furchtbar, ungeheuer!  
 Ins Düstre rötet sich sein Feuer ...  
 Nicht näher, drohend-mächtige Runde!  
 Du richtest uns und Land und Meer zugrunde!

So wär es wahr, daß dich thessalische Frauen  
 In frevlen magischem Vertrauen  
 Von deinem Pfad herabgesungen,  
 Verderblichstes dir abgerungen? ...  
 Das lichte Schild hat sich undunkelt,

Auf einmal reißt's und blitzt und funkelt!  
 Welch ein Geprassel! Welch ein Zischen!  
 Ein Donnern, Windgetüm dazwischen! --



Demütig zu des Thrones Stufen! --  
 Verzeiht! Ich hab' es hergerufen. Wirft sich aufs  
Angesicht.  
 (vv. 7910-29).

It seems clear that what is being represented here is the final discrediting of the vulcanists and their theory, which is identified with the wahnhaften Mondsturz. The whole scene represents, on a purely descriptive, literal level, the descent of a meteor seen through the eyes of a deluded Schwärmer, and on a symbolic level the refutation, not only of the geophysical theory of vulcanism -- of the whole "vermaledaite Polterkammer der neuen Weltschöpfung" (JA.40.328) -- but also of its equivalent in the social-political human sphere -- the implication being that mighty revolutions and huge historical catastrophes only destroy indiscriminately all those concerned:

Der Fels war aus dem Mond gefallen;  
 Gleich hat er, ohne nachzufragen,  
 So Freund als Feind gequetscht, erschlagen ...  
 (vv. 7939-41).

Thales, who is as partisan as Anaxagoras in the defence of his neptunist theory, can accord the whole phenomenon no credibility or validity whatever; he shrugs the whole episode off, not altogether convincingly, as a delusion of Anaxagoras, as "nur gedacht":



Gestehen wir, es sind verrückte Stunden,  
 Und Luna wiegt sich ganz bequem  
 An ihrem Platz, so wie vordem.  
 (vv. 7933-5)

Homunculus, who is more impartial than Thales on this issue, does see the potentially creative force in the meteoric phenomenon<sup>67</sup> -- though he is evidently not sufficiently impressed to throw in his lot with Anaxagoras:

Doch muß ich solche Künste loben,  
 Die schöpferisch, in einer Nacht,  
 Zugleich von unten und von oben,  
 Dies Berggebäu zustand gebracht.  
 (vv. 7942-5)

And so, led by Thales, he makes his way to the Meerfest, where he is promised an opportunity of organic evolution and growth according to the neptunist canon<sup>68</sup>:

Im Feuchten ist Lebendiges entstanden.  
 (v. 7856)

There now only remains, before the time is ready for the initiation of the sea-festival, the resolution of the Mephisto-intrigue in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht. The vulcanist aspect, the historical and "earth-bound" element has been overcome in this Wahnhafter Mondsturz scene, in which the moon played a negative part in the invocation of its dark, onthonic aspect -- as Hecate, not as Luna. But before the true lunar el-



ement can emerge, before the mystery of creation and organic growth which culminates in the appearance of the ideal of mythical beauty in Galatea can begin, the polarity of absolute ugliness must be established -- an important part of the whole Klassische Walpurgisnacht, since it extends beyond the mythical episode into the third act. This is effected in vv. 7951-8033, where Mephisto assumes the form of Phorkyas, and as soon as this is accomplished, the scene changes to the Felsbuchten des ägäischen Meers.

The Meerfest, the culmination and crescendo of the whole Klassische Walpurgisnacht, takes place under the aegis of the moon, "in Zenith verharrend", and the Sirens, the "Dämonen unserer Bucht", who now assume their wholly positive and central rôle in the action<sup>69</sup>, introduce the scene with their hymn to Luna:

Haben sonst bei mächtigem Grauen  
 Dich thessalische Zauberfrauen  
 Frevelhaft herabgezogen,  
 Blicke ruhig von dem Bogen  
 Deiner Nacht auf Zitterwogen  
 Mildeblitzend Glanzgewimmel  
 Und erleuchte das Getümmel,  
 Das sich aus den Wogen hebt!  
 Dir zu jedem Dienst erbötig,  
 Schöne Luna, sei uns gnädig!  
 (vv. 8034-43).



-- The occult invocation of the Hecate-aspect of the moon-deity is a thing of the past ("Haben sonst bei nächtigem Grauen"), as is the Wahnhafter Mondsturz and with it the whole "Polterkammer" of the previous scene; the keynote here is Ruhe, Milde, Heiterkeit -- a setting more appropriate to the emergence of beauty from the sea.

Once again, we find in the symbolic associations of the moon here many of the earlier associations of the image for Goethe: the peace and calm, the relaxing and soothing influence of moonlight which had been a common enough topos in 18th century lyric poetry, and which reached its finest expression in Goethe's early Weimar moon-lyrics. And once again the moon is reflected in the waves, it pervades the elements of air and water with its mild, serene and magical light, which lights up the "Getümmel, das sich aus den Wogen hebt".

We have already dealt at some length with the general symbolic associations of the moon in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht as a whole, and with the antecedents for these associations -- notably the Romantic connotations, and those of Goethe's own earlier lyrics and observations, of the Italienische Reise, of Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren, of the later lyrics, and so on<sup>70</sup>. But there are other associations which only make them-



selves fully apparent in this last scene, which are again not altogether unique to the image of the moon as it appears in this immediate context, but which here reach their fullest expression -- just as the image of the moon in general in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht represents in many ways the distillation of the associations of the image as it has appeared throughout Goethe's works.

The moonlight which pervades the Meerfest scene is peculiarly suited to this re-enactment of an ancient, pre-classical mystery, a festival which has distinct elements of a cult, of the Elusinian and of other ancient mysteries -- in which the moon similarly played a significant part<sup>71</sup>. For the moon here represents not simply "der empirische Erdtrabant", as Hedwig Vogel points out, but "das geistige Prinzip des geheimnisvollen Planeten, das in diesen Natur-Geburts-Mysterien mit-agiert"<sup>72</sup>, it reigns over this mystery, this cult of eros and fertility, of creation and organic growth by virtue of its archetypal association with the female lunar deity -- which is itself widely associated with fertility and birth, with growth and change in modern and ancient folklore, superstition and myth<sup>73</sup> -- and also by virtue of its primordial association with water, itself the elemental source of life from which living organisms originated.



Apart from the "festal" element of moonlight in the Meerfest scene (which is itself compounded, not only of extrinsic mythological and folkloric associations, but also of the whole gamut of the "personal symbolism" of the image for Goethe to which we have referred), there is also here a very important function served by the moon which has already been indicated shortly, but the full significance of which is only realised now, when the moon "im Zenith verharret".

Time itself is suspended; the historical aspect of political and social reality -- which had appeared throughout the episode to counterpoint the mythical aspect, in the evocation of the battles of Pharsalus and Pydna, in the figure of Chiron, in the Sphinxes, and in the whole allegory of the Thales-Anaxagoras scene -- is now excluded completely, and the timeless sphere of archaic myth is conjured<sup>74</sup>. Just as Manto's "ewiger Tempel" had stood "bedeutend nah / Im Mondenschein", just as the moon had effaced the historical element, "der Zelten Trug", at the opening of the Klassische Walburgisnacht, so here it remains poised at its zenith for the whole duration of the sea-festival.

It is a curious feature of the moon here that while it remains fixed at its zenith, it is at the same time, as we have already noted, "unvollkommen", "beschnitten", a waning gibbous moon<sup>75</sup>; there is, however, no contra-



diction in this apparent paradox. The Meerfest, the whole confused and profuse carnival of mythical and fabulous figures, is destined to give way to the clear, bright, classical forms of Act III; the whole scene is after all a part (certainly, the final and most significant part) of the unconscious educative process of Faust towards the conscious realisation of his quest for Helena. And this whole process will wane into forgetfulness when the action emerges into the sunlight, and onto the level of the conscious mind -- the only element of the whole Klassische Walpurgisnacht which extends literally into Act III is the figure of Mephisto-Phorkyas; the rest "flies forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day". For the moment, however, the moon "verharret im Zenith", we are in the timeless sphere of myth, although it is, like the deities and creatures it "bodies forth", bound to fade from the conscious mind once it has finished its course<sup>76</sup>. This absence of any literal dramatic or thematic connexions between the Klassische Walpurgisnacht and the rest of the drama (with the exception of Phorkyas) is essentially a function of its symbolic, as opposed to a dramatic, significance for the development of Faust on the one hand, and for the structure of Faust II as a whole on the other.

This arresting of a moment in time, or rather the



suspension of chronological time altogether, is moreover not uncommon in Goethe's work. It is often represented by the moment of midnight -- which we may reasonably assume to be equivalent to the point at which the moon reaches its zenith here. It is at midnight that Faust dies, that his soul leaves his body (vv. 11593ff); and in the Märchen, it is midnight that represents "die glückliche Stunde":

... Und wirklich war Mitternacht  
herbeigekommen man wußte nicht wie.  
Der Alte sah nach den Sternen und fing  
darauf zu reden an: Wir sind zur glück-  
lichen Stunde beisammen, jeder verrichte  
sein Amt, jeder tue seine Pflicht und  
ein allgemeines Glück wird die einzelnen  
Schmerzen in sich auflösen, wie ein  
allgemeines Unglück einzelne Freuden  
verzehrt 77.

(WA.I.18.258).

And in the poem Um Mitternacht, it is not only at midnight, but also under "des vollen Mondes Helle" that time is similarly suspended and past, present and future are fused:

Bis dann zuletzt des vollen Mondes Helle  
So klar und deutlich mir ins Finstere drang,  
Auch der Gedanke willig, sinnig, schnelle  
Sich ums Vergangne wie ums Künftige schlang; 78  
Um Mitternacht.

This, then, is the high-point of the whole Klassische Walpurgisnacht; the moon remains at its zenith



for the rest of the act, and will give way to the domination of the sun when the festival has reached its triumphant close. The Sirens ensure the perpetuation of this moment, they pray for the continued suspension of time to the deity under whose auspices the cult of water and eros is to take place:

Bleibe auf deinen Höhen,  
 Holde Luna, gnädig stehn,  
 Das es mächtig verbleibe,  
 Uns der Tag nicht vertreibe!  
 (vv. 8078-81).

A very striking feature of this Sirens' hymn to Luna, and of other passages in the Meerfest scene, is the close parallel between the prayers addressed to the goddess and certain lines from the final Bergschluchten scene of the drama. This coincidence of content and expression occurs in three passages in particular. The first is in vv. 8041-2, at the end of the Sirens' opening hymn to Luna, which corresponds to the prayer of Doctor Marianus to the Mater Gloriosa in the final scene (vv. 12100-4):

Dir zu jedem Dienst erbötig,  
 Schöne Luna, sei uns gnädig!

Werde jeder beßre Sinn  
 Dir zum Dienst erbötig;  
 Jungfrau, Mutter, Königin,  
 Göttin, bleibe gnädig!

It is as if there is some parallel here in



Goethe's mind between the moon which reigns "mild" and "gnädig" over the archaic mystery, between this essentially female deity (as opposed to the "brother" Helios), and the figure of the Madonna who, as "das Ewig-Weibliche", presides over the final scene in Heaven. The moon, too, is "Jungfrau" (Diana), "Mutter" (in her capacity as goddess of childbirth and fertility<sup>79</sup>), and "Königin" (as the regina caeli, a rôle she shared with the Virgin in the Middle Ages, who was frequently represented as appearing in the crescent moon<sup>80</sup>); and the moon is, of course, "Göttin" -- indeed, this attribute as applied to the Mater Gloriosa sounds curiously pagan in an otherwise Christian context.

This is not the only coincidence between the two scenes, however; there is, as Kerényi points out<sup>81</sup>, an echo of the words of the Chorus Mysticus in the expression of the longing of the Kabiren for "das Unerreichliche":

Diese Unvergleichlichen  
Wollen immer weiter,  
Sehnsuchtsvolle Hungerleider  
Nach dem Unerreichlichen.  
(vv. 8202-5)

Das Unzulängliche,  
Hier wird's Ereignis ...  
Das Ewig-Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan.  
(vv. 12106ff)

-- The parallel here lies not so much in the literal correspondence of the verses as in the overall general movement of the two scenes; the Sirens answer the Kabiren with their own "Lied vom Unerreichlichen".



indicating that their object of adoration is Luna:

Wir sind gewohnt,  
 Wo es [i.e. das Unerreichliche] auch thront,  
 In Sonn' und Mond  
 Einzubeten; es lohnt.  
 (vv. 8206-9)

Common to both the Meerfest scene and the Bergschluchten scene is the overall upward movement: in the former towards the "Allieblichste Göttin am Bogen da droben" (v. 8289), and in the latter towards the Mater Gloriosa, to "Das Ewig-Weibliche". There is in both scenes a striving towards a higher state, expressed in the Meerfest scene by the striving of the Kabiren "nach dem Unerreichlichen", and in the Bergschluchten scene by the striving of the "seligen Knaben" to "höheren Kreise" (v. 11918).

A third parallel might serve to illustrate this: towards the culmination of the Meerfest, "das Unerreichliche", as Kerényi points out, "meldet sich durch ein Zeichen ..., und erst damit erreicht das Fest -- nicht sein Ende, sondern seine Vollendung" <sup>82</sup>. This sign is the appearance of an aureole around the moon, a Mondhof:

Welch ein Ring von Wölkchen ründet  
 Um den Mond so reichen Kreis?  
 Tauben sind es, liebentzündet,  
 Fittiche, wie Licht so weiß.



Paphos hat sie hergesendet,  
 Ihre brünstige Vogelschar;  
 Unser Fest, es ist vollendet,  
 Heitre Wonne voll und klar!  
 (vv. 8339-46)

This Mondhof, which might be taken by the casual or unknowing observer to be a "Lufterscheinung", is not this at all, as Nereus points out:

Nannte wohl ein nächtiger Wanderer  
 Diesen Mondhof Lufterscheinung;  
 Doch wir Geister sind ganz anderer  
 Und der einzig richtigen Meinung:  
 Tauben sind es, die begleiten  
 Meiner Tochter Muschelfahrt,  
 Wunderflugs besondrer Art,  
 Angelernt von alten Zeiten.  
 (vv. 8347-54)

It is clear that Goethe is here drawing on his meteorological observations, and on the symbolism derived from them; his especial interest in Mondhöfe purely as "Lufterscheinungen" is evident from both the Witterungslehre and the Farbenlehre, in the course of which he made close observations of cloud-formations around the moon -- indeed, his interest in this kind of phenomenon dates from very much earlier, from the early Weimar years<sup>83</sup>. But in this particular passage from the Meerfest, the Mondhof symbolises -- or rather is, to the true vision of the "Geister" -- not moonlight reflected in thin cloud, but the doves of Aphrodite, which herald the appearance from the moon of Galatea, who is Aphro-



dite's successor as the Cypriot deity (vv. 8144ff), and who has inherited Venus's attributes as goddess of love as well as her "Muschelthron", in which she later appears, like Venus, anadyomene.

The doves which cluster around the face of the moon imply here that the advent of eros in the shape of Aphrodite-Galatea is closely associated with the moon itself<sup>84</sup>; and at the same time it is this lunar element which represents "das Unerreichliche" that the Sirens worship. And the doves, "liebentzündet", "brünstig", which encircle the moon like cirrus-clouds -- like "jene leicht hinschwebenden Wolken, die so gern am Mond vorüberziehen" (WA.II.12.10) -- symbolise the upward movement of the whole scene towards eros, towards the highest manifestation of female beauty and love, Aphrodite-Galatea. Cirrus, as we know from Howards Ehrengedächtnis, is the highest, most rarified and purified form of cloud, the most ethereal<sup>85</sup>, which in symbolic terms represents the highest stage of the "edle Drang ... zum Vater oben":

Doch immer höher steigt der edle Drang!  
Erlösung ist ein himmlisch leichter Zwang.<sup>86</sup>  
Ein Aufgehäuftes, flockig löst sich's auf.  
Wie Schäflein trippelnd, leicht gekämmt zuhauf.  
So fließt zuletzt, was unten leicht entstand,  
Dem Vater oben still in Schoß und Hand.







caution. The parallels are not only the quite literal ones found in the similarity of verse-forms between vv. 8042-3 and 12100-4, and between vv. 8339-42 and 11890-93; there also seems to be a distinct similarity between the image of Luna in the one and the Mater Gloriosa in the other, in that both are represented as the presiding deities of the respective scenes, both are seen as surrounded by clouds, representing the erotic, aphrodisiac element in the one, and the attraction of "das Ewig-Weibliche" in the other. Both Luna and the Madonna are objects of the highest adoration, and both represent an aspect of "das Unerreichliche"; and common to both scenes is the upward movement towards the unattainable, seen in the Sehnsucht of the Kabiren in the Meerfest and in the striving of the souls "zu höherm Kreise", "zu höherm Sphären" in the scene in Heaven. And cloud-symbolism is in both scenes the expression of this upward movement.

More generally, there is a similarity between the whole development of the two scenes. They both represent a process of development from lower to higher, a process of growth and metamorphosis: in the one the development of organic life in past pre-history, an archaic pagan mystery expressed in terms of classical (or rather pre-classical) mythical images; and in the other the devel-



opment and upward movement of the soul in a future state of grace, expressed in terms of Christian imagery. And in both the movement is one towards an essentially feminine ideal, in the Meerfest towards eros, symbolised by Luna-Aphrodite and realised in Galatea, and in the final scene towards "das Ewig-Weibliche", symbolised in the Mater Gloriosa. The two mysteries are enacted respectively under the aegis of the moon and of the Madonna, and it would not seem altogether unjustified or extravagant to see in the Luna of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht the archaic, pagan counterpart of the Christian figure of the Mater Gloriosa<sup>87</sup>.

It might be added here, finally, that just as Goethe was using the Catholic imagery of the scenes in Heaven with no overtly religious purpose, but in order to express in these mysteriously symbolic terms his own personal thought and beliefs concerning salvation and man's striving for a higher state, so too he was plagiarising the archaic myths, which the Romantic philosophers and mythologists were at the time resurrecting and expounding in all seriousness, very much for his own ends; and it may not be altogether heretical to suggest that he uses the imagery of the two systems, the ancient and the Christian, with an equal measure of irony.



With the appearance of Aphrodite's doves in the Mondhof, the festival nears its culmination -- but not before the envoys of the sun, the Telchinen von Rhodus have appeared as representatives of the solar element at the festival of Helios/Apollo's sister; more than that, however, the Telchinen also represent the sphere of art in the midst of this Naturfest -- they are present in their capacity as the first artists<sup>88</sup> :

SIRENEN. Euch, dem Helios geweihten,  
Heitern Tags Gebenszeiten,  
Grus zur Stunde, die bewegt  
Lunas Hochverehrung regt!

TELCHINEN. Alllieblichste Göttin am Bogen da droben!  
Du hörst mit Entzücken den Bruder beloben.  
Der seligen Rhodus verleihst du ein Ohr,  
Dort steigt ihm ein ewiger Pfän hervor.  
.....  
Da schaut sich der Hohe in hundert Gebilden.  
Als Jüngling, als Riesen, den großen, den milden.  
Wir ersten, wir waren's, die Göttergewalt  
Aufstellten in würdiger Menschengestalt.  
(vv. 8285ff)

It is here that the polarities of day and night, of sun and moon in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht come nearest to their union<sup>89</sup>; the appearance of the Telchinen is an integral part of the whole movement of the second act from darkness towards light, from chaos and unconscious groping, through the still confused but progressively more brightly illuminated mythical, lunar sphere to the bright sunlight of full consciousness and



classical reality in which Helena will appear, and in which alone the permanent Kunstwerk can be portrayed. For Helena, while she is very much a product of the symbolic Naturfest which forms the most important part of her Antezedenzen, while she is "der schöne Mensch" as "das letzte Produkt der sich immer steigernden Natur", is at the same time realisable in permanent, lasting form only in terms of art. Goethe indicated elsewhere that the highest art-forms depend, not on purely aesthetic models and criteria, but on the "Gesetzen der Natur" <sup>90</sup>, and he says as much again in his essay on Winckelmann, which has considerable bearing on the appearance of Helena, "der schöne Mensch", as the product of both nature and of art, on her appearance as both "wahrhaft-lebendig" and as the ideal of aesthetic beauty:

Das letzte Produkt der sich immer steigernden Natur ist der schöne Mensch. Zwar kann sie ihn nur selten hervorbringen, weil ihren Ideen gar viele Bedingungen widerstreben, und selbst ihrer Allmacht ist es unmöglich, lange im Vollkommenen zu verweilen und dem hervorgebrachten Schönen eine Dauer zu geben ... Dagegen tritt nun die Kunst ein: denn indem der Mensch auf den Gipfel der Natur gestellt ist, so sieht er sich wieder als eine ganze Natur an, die in sich abermals einen Gipfel hervorzubringen hat. Dazu steigert er sich, indem er sich mit allen Vollkommenheiten und Tugenden durchdringt, Wahl, Ordnung, Harmonie und Bedeutung aufruft und sich endlich bis zur Produktion des Kunstwerkes



erhebt, das neben seinen übrigen Taten und Werken einen glänzenden Platz einnimmt. Ist es einmal hervorgebracht, steht es in seiner idealen Wirklichkeit vor der Welt, so bringt es eine dauernde Wirkung, es bringt die höchste hervor: denn indem es aus den gesamten Kräften sich geistig entwickelt, so nimmt es alles Herrliche, Verehrungs- und Lebenswürdige in sich auf und erhebt, indem es die menschliche Gestalt besetzt, den Menschen über sich selbst, schließt seinen Lebens- und Tatenkreis ab und vergöttert ihn für die Gegenwart, in der das Vergangene und Künftige begriffen ist.  
(WA.I.46.28-9)

So here Helena, the highest product of nature, who will be given timeless permanence through art, is heralded by the "Helios-Verehrer", the Telchines, in their function both as envoys of the sun and as the first artists; in the third act, "Helena ... als Inbegriff der in der Natur wirkenden Schönheit, geistige Innenseite der Natur, wird vom Menschen Faust, der wiederum die ganze Natur umfaßt und insofern auch eine unsichtbare Potenz der klassischen Walpurgisnacht bleibt, als 'ideale Wirklichkeit vor der Welt' in jenem schöpferischen Akte hervorgebracht, der dem Göttlichen menschliche Gestalt gibt und den Menschen unter die Götter versetzt" 91.

Here, however, in the Heerfest, the appearance of Helena is only heralded: the culmination of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is the conjuring, not of Helena,



but of her mythical, lunar counterpart Galatea<sup>92</sup>. Galatea makes her appearance heralded by the Doriden, the "Grazien des Meers" (v. 8137), who like the Graces are associated with moonlight ritual<sup>93</sup>, and who here bring with them the young men rescued from the sea and whom they must lose again in the highest form of Entsagung<sup>94</sup>!

Leih uns, Luna, Licht und Schatten,  
Klarheit diesem Jugendflor!  
Denn wir zeigen liebe Gatten  
Unserm Vater bittend vor.  
(vv. 8391-4)

With the appearance of Galatea, the Klassische Walpurgisnacht closes with a crescendo of praise which hails the emergence of beauty from the sea. Galatea cannot, however, being a product of the nature-mystery of the Meerfest, be arrested in her course, she cannot remain ("selbst ihrer Allmacht [i.e. der Natur] ist es unmöglich, lange im Vollkommenen zu verweilen und dem hervorgebrachten Schönen eine Dauer zu geben ...") -- this will only be possible in the sphere of art, in Act III. She passes on, and the act ends with the full chorus representing and praising the mingling of the elements, a chorus of praise to love, to beauty and to the "heitre Wonne" of the lunar sea-festival.

It is here that Homunculus's "herrisches Sehnen"



urges him "von vorn die Schöpfung anzufangen"; just as Faust had longed to plunge into the moonlit dew to find oblivion and a new life, so here Homunculus plunges into the moon-reflecting sea --

Da, wo Luna doppelt leuchtet,  
Uns mit heil'gem Tau befeuchtet

-- to experience a new beginning, a process of regeneration, of "Sterben und Werden ... zu höherer Begattung".

With the close of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht in this paen of praise, the Antezedenzien of Helena are over; the scene is set for the appearance of the heroine herself, not in mythical form, nor as eidolon, but as "wahrhaft-lebendig": "nicht als Zwischenspielerin, sondern als Heroine ... nicht mehr phantasmagorisch und eingeschoben, sondern in aesthetisch-vernunftmäßiger Folge". And with the appearance of Helena -- appropriately enough, she too appears as it were anadyomene, "noch immer trunken von des Gewoges regsamen Geschaukel" (v. 8490) -- the day dawns, the unconscious, inner, mythical lunar element wanes, it recedes from the conscious mind into forgetfulness, and sunlight dominates the whole act. The moon has played its part in the drama -- the most profound and many-sided function that the image of the moon has had in any of Goethe's works -- and does not appear again in any significant form in the rest of



the work.





### Conclusion



In the course of this examination of the image of the moon as it appears through Goethe's works, one quantitative factor has emerged very clearly: that the moon, whether used as image (that is, as a visual image in the narrowest sense, as a natural object), as simile, metaphor, allegory or symbol, is a motif which recurs with remarkable persistence throughout Goethe's lyrical, dramatic and narrative fiction, in his landscape drawings, and to a lesser extent in his scientific observations. This very frequency of Goethe's use of the image indicates that the moon was indeed for the poet a primordial symbol, in the sense that it was among those images in which he invested a whole wealth of private symbolism, as well as drawing on the traditional symbolism (whether "archetypal" or derived directly and consciously from literary, mythological or folkloric antecedents) which formed part of the cultural heritage of the 18th century.

The purpose of the present study has been an analysis of the symbolic meaning and association which has accrued around the image in the course of Goethe's development as a poet and thinker, and it has attempted to assess, on the one hand the originality and uniqueness



of his moon-imagery within its strict literary context, and on the other to examine how far the image betrays the "Logik der Motive" -- that is, the position and significance of this particular image in the complex system of Goethe's imagery as a whole. The image of the moon does not have any pride of place, any a priori claim to pre-eminence among Goethe's other "primordial" symbols; it would be difficult, and invidious, to attempt to assert a pre-eminence of this image over those of sun, stars, water and other manifestly central images of Goethe's symbolic thinking and expression. What does emerge from a study of his moon-imagery, however, on both qualitative and quantitative grounds, is that this motif runs through much, though not all, of Goethe's work as a significant and powerful element.

Of all poetic images, the moon, perhaps, above all, runs the risk of overuse and of degenerating into  cliché; in German literature, this has happened notably at three stages of its development: in the 18th century poetry of Empfindsamkeit, in the 19th century in the Romantic idiom, and in the 20th century in the imagery of the Expressionist poets. Indeed, in the present age, the moon as a traditional poetic motif seems nearer than ever to extinction, on the one hand because of a general malaise concerning the validity of figurative



and metaphorical expression as a whole, and on the other because the moon is no longer the object of distant visual experience but of immediate scrutiny and accessibility.

Yet the moon, as much as any other vehicle of literary expression, has time and again proved its power of regeneration as a metaphor or symbol, and it is possible that modern technology will succeed in demythologising the moon no more than the telescope and the calculations of 17th and 18th century astronomers did. Goethe himself lived at a time when the image of the moon seemed threatened as a poetic motif as much as at any other time, by close scientific scrutiny on the one hand and by literary overuse on the other; what is remarkable about Goethe's use of the image in his work is the short time in which he shed literary convention and  cliché, and the supreme originality he brought to his use of the image. Moreover, however narrow and precise a study of this one motif may be, it casts an interesting light on the development of his imagery in general, and on the whole direction of his progressive creative thinking.

The image of the moon is used variously by Goethe as simple visual image, as metaphor, simile, allegory and symbol, and finally emerges as the central object



of a whole mythical system. In the course of the present study, I have not made any systematic attempt at a rigorous distinction between these rhetorical figures, nor do I believe that any such formal definition would contribute much to the essential understanding of the figures themselves. Certainly, the progression in Goethe's use of the image of the moon is, as is only to be expected, in very general terms "the normal procedure [of] the turning of images into metaphors and metaphors into symbols" <sup>1</sup> -- that is, the turning of images into motifs, and the turning of motifs into symbolic leitmotifs. On the other hand, apart from this process, the formal development of Goethe's imagery is not always consistent, or even consonant with his general literary development; indeed, it is difficult to decide whether the use of the image with allegorical significance (as in the Maskenspiele of the 1780's) can be described as a progression or a regression from its use as a strictly formal metaphorical analogy in Tasso; whether the mythological personification of the moon in Iphigenie or the Römische Elegien marks a development from the use of the moon as a motif with certain symbolic overtones in the early Weimar lyrics; or finally, whether the moon is any more overtly "symbolic" in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht than it is in the late lyrics such as Um Mitternacht



or Dem aufsehenden Vollmonde.

The first appearance of the image of the moon in Goethe's works is the "Luna" of the Leipziger Liederbuch, which has little enough in common with the moon of his later works, or even with the developing trends and tendencies in the late 18th century; it leans more heavily on backward-looking anacreontic sources than on the reaction to such arcadian tendencies which was setting in under the influence of Klopstock, Herder and Macpherson's Ossian. By 1769, however, with An Luna, a development in Goethe's use of the image can be noted with the introduction of the Ossianic "Nebelschauer", the description of a diffuse and misty moonlight which sets the tone of Goethe's moon-imagery for the next two decades: a moon associated essentially with mist, cloud, obscure outlines and the "Schönheitsideal" of Dämmerung, which was to preoccupy the poet until his journey to the Mediterranean.

The development of Goethe's early moon-imagery is indeed very much in step with the time -- with the sentimental landscape of Klopstock and Ossian, which is itself a development of the vogue for nocturnal imagery which can be traced back even further than the publication of Young's Night Thoughts in 1745, in which the



author claimed that he had "this revolution in the world inspir'd" by the introduction of the image of the moon<sup>2</sup>. In his early work, Goethe draws for the most part on the traditional late 18th century topos of moonlight, on the moon as an image which indicates and suggests a mood of gentle melancholy, of peace and nostalgic reflection, counterpointed by bursts of Ossianic fustian and extravagance. Madame de Staël's observation that Werther "a mis la clair de lune à la mode"<sup>3</sup> is only half-true; and at the same time Goethe was developing a more individual and original perception of the image than its use in the novel might suggest.

The appeal to the moon in the Urfaust monologue, despite its derived "Ossianic" associations, introduces a truly original element into Goethe's moon-imagery, and one which is to play a significant part in his subsequent expression of the image: the notion of moonlight, not simply as a melancholy, elegiac Stimmungsmittel, but as a dynamic image associated with positive recovery and regeneration, particularly in its primordial association with the baptismal element of dew and water, and its private association with the notion of bathing oneself to health which recurs in the early Weimar years and in the opening scene of Faust II. The moon plays a significant part as a motif in the Faust-drama, and



common to nearly all the passages and episodes in which it occurs is the notion of recovery and a renewal of strength, a new beginning, most profoundly expressed in the second part in the opening scene of Faust's regeneration and again in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht in *Homunculus's* "herrisches Sehnen" for a new existence by plunging into the moonlit Aegean.

At the same time, the conception of the moon as a guide in darkness, as "Führer des Gestirns", expressed in the Mahomet ode, gives an early indication of the very much later use of the image as a powerful symbol of triumphant light breaking through and dispelling darkness which is one of the most common features of Goethe's late lyrics. But it is with the early Weimar lyrics that the first "phase" of Goethe's use of the moon as an image, and more particularly as a lyrical image, reaches its fullest development. Certainly, even here it owes much to its antecedents; but the influence of Klopstock, Ossian and the tradition of Empfindsamkeit is no longer as obvious as it had been in his previous work; it is here that the image of the moon begins to accrue the personal symbolism which it will carry with it to varying degrees through the rest of his oeuvre.

It is a curious feature of Goethe's development



as a writer that the Mondsucht à la mode of Empfindsamkeit, while it disappears completely from his major works after about 1775, should be continued, in a more or less ironical or satirical context, well beyond this stage of his career. It is relegated, certainly, to Singspiele and Divertimenti written for the Weimar court; but it is a curious comment on the prevailing tastes of the court circles, and on Goethe's willingness to cater for these tastes, that the artificial stage-moonlight of the Empfindsamkeit tradition should survive even the satirical treatment it receives in Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit of 1778, and should continue beyond the return from Italy in the minor Gelegenheitsstücke written by Goethe in his capacity as theatre director in Weimar.

With the move to Weimar, however, the moon emerges in Goethe's serious lyric poetry, in his letters and diaries, and in his landscape drawings as a central and significant leitmotif. In his drawings, it is clearly a purely visual image, a feature of the nocturnal mood-landscapes which he sketched more frequently during this period than any other; for though the moon features more frequently in the drawings of the Italienische Reise, it is in a very different visual context from the misty, obscure and essentially "Northern" scenes of the early



Weimar drawings and sketches. And it is during the first years in Weimar that the drawings seem to reflect most closely the imagery of the lyric poems; although no particular drawing can be related with any certainty to a particular lyric poem, the similarity of mood of the moon-lyrics and the drawings of moonlit landscape, and the similarity of motifs -- mist, cloud, twilight and obscure forms -- indicate that the pictorial and the lyrical perception of the moon and moonlight were at this time closely related. In the letters, the moon and moonlight are regularly described and alluded to, particularly in the letters to Frau von Stein -- which, of course, constitute the bulk of Goethe's correspondence during these years. And more than anything else during this period, the moon and moonlight seem to be associated with the influence of the woman with whom he himself was most closely associated.

It would be difficult to prove conclusively and beyond doubt that the figure of Charlotte von Stein was at this time identified by Goethe with the image of the moon as it appears in his lyric poetry. It is rather by virtue of the common associations of the "Freundin" on the one hand and of the image of the moon on the other that we are led to see some correlation between the two. The peace and freedom from care which Goethe



so obviously found in the company of the woman who herself seemed at times as remote and aloof as the moon, who appeared to the poet as "Madonna, die gen Himmel fährt", whose whole presence and personality seems to us, in retrospect, as pale and white as moonlight, like the white clothes she wore: this relaxation and longing for peace is equally expressed in the moonlit landscape of Jägers Abendlied and An den Mond, and the influence of the same woman makes itself felt in the priestess of Diana and in the Princess of Tasso, whose passions are described in terms of pale, shadowy moonlight. The moon is at this time "wie der Liebsten Auge mild" -- and the direct association of this simile with Charlotte is borne out by the fact that in her own parody of the same poem, she reversed the image and referred the "Auge" back to the "Freund" who had created the original.

At the same time, the scope of the image of the moon during this period extends far beyond its biographical association with peace and stability, with the "Linderung" and "Erquickung" which Goethe found in his intimacy with Frau von Stein. It is here that the moon begins to emerge as more than a visual image, more even than an element of the landscape which reflects the feelings and thoughts of the "lyrische Ich" of the poet in the dialogue between nature and the human response to



nature. In the second version of An den Mond and in the diaries of the second Schweizer Reise of 1779, the image of the moon and stars used in conjunction with, or more often reflected in the element of water becomes a motif in Goethe's work which is to recur with more and more clearly symbolic meaning throughout his later writing. Water is the dynamic image of flux and time, the allegory of the prophet's life in Mahomets Gesang, the symbol of man's soul in Gesang der Geister über den Wassern, and the metaphor of the transience of human values in An den Mond. The stars and the moon which are reflected in this element, or which are used in polar contrast to it, are the symbols of divine or eternal order, of cosmic permanence, of "Dauer im Wechsel"; themselves unattainable, they are at the same time a promise and a reassurance of unchanging values. And although the precise symbolic or figurative reference expressed by the imagery of water on the one hand, and of the heavenly bodies on the other, changes from poem to poem, from context to context, the polarity remains the same: between transience and permanence, between flux and stability, between the dynamic and the static, the "Spiegelung" of the eternal and the divine in the transient and the human.

It is also during the early Weimar years that the



polarities of day and night, of practical activity and imaginative experience -- the polarities which run through the drama Tasso -- are first formulated in terms of sun and moon-imagery. In the 1782 Maskenzug, Der Aufzug der Vier Weltalter, sun and moon appear as allegories of nature and art respectively, just as day and night in later masquerades represent the spheres of practical activity and of the poetic imagination; it is the same polarity as that expressed in the lines written to Frau von Stein in 1777, where the moonlit night represents the relaxation of conscious, practical activity, when care is bathed away just as Faust had longed to bathe himself to health in the dew of the moon:

Tauche mich in die Sonne früh,  
Bad ab im Monde des Tages Müh ...

And it is in Tasso that this opposition of day and night, sun and moon, Antonio and Tasso, is expressed in terms of a metaphor which suggests in concise and succinct form the whole dichotomy between the man of action and practical wisdom and the poet and dreamer. Tasso's description of his poetic existence as a moonlight, reflected, illusory one is a metaphor which on the one hand cannot possibly be removed from its dramatic context, nor from the context of the whole complex of



imagery of "Schein" and reflection which runs through the drama, but which at the same time refers beyond its context to the whole series of night and moon-symbolism which has its beginnings in the lyrics and letters, the reports and drawings of the early Weimar years.

It is not inappropriate that during this period of seclusion between 1775 and 1786 the moon should be one of the dominant images in Goethe's poetry; for it was at this time more than at any other that Goethe felt the tension between the man of practical affairs and the imaginative poet and thinker, between the Minister of State and the creative writer, between his "day-time" activity and his "moonlight" existence. It is at this time that his struggle to combine the two spheres seems at its most acute, as his references in letters to the "Druck der Geschäfte" and the "Tagewerk, das mir aufgetragen ist" indicate. And it is now that Goethe feels the exclusivity of lyric poetry as a genre which exists for its own sake, that he feels the most patent divorce between his purely lyrical activity and his social responsibility.

Very little of Goethe's poetic production in the early Weimar years is concerned with the immediate present, with the here and now; much of his lyric poetry is concerned either with elegiac nostalgia for the past,



as in An den Mond, or with a longing for an idyllic future, as in the vision of Italy in Mignon's song. The image of the moon in the poems of this period is associated primarily with backward-looking nostalgia, with an elegiac vision of the past; it is above all a lyrical motif, associated with mist and half-light, with obscure feelings and intimations, with the "Labyrinth der Brust", with blurred contours and half-suggested states of mind. And as such, it is one of the central motifs which go to make up the essential ambiguity of the lyrics of this period, which express the Janus-faced characteristic of these years between the early Sturm und Drang and the post-Italian classicism; the ambiguity of feeling which runs through Jägers Abendlied, with its pull between the "wanderer" and the "hut", between the "Urmensch ohne Zweck und Ruh" and the longing for peace; the ambiguity of emotion in the twilight zone of An den Mond, of the poems Einschränkung and Ilmenau, and the demonic ambiguity of Der Fischer and Erkönig.

But it is during these pre-Italian years that Goethe grows impatient with the state of mind that expresses itself in the lyrical idiom, in the elegiac mood of the Weimar lyrics; and the flight to Italy is as much a flight to an immediate, hedonistic existence, where



thoughts of the past or future are banished, as it is a flight from the suffocating pressures of official and court life in Weimar. It is a flight from the "Nebel des traurigen Nordens", where the moon had been a central motif in the misty landscape, to the "sternhelle Nacht" of Italy, where the moon "leuchtet wie eine zweite Sonne". And though the moon features frequently and significantly in the descriptions and drawings of the Italian landscape, it has a very different quality of light from that of the "Bild der Zärtlichkeit in Trauer" of An Luna, from the "trübseelige Freund" of Urfaust or the reflected "Nebelglanz" of An den Mond.

All this Goethe leaves behind him when he travels South; what attracts him in the Italian night sky is the clarity and brightness of the moonlight, "come il sole d'Inghilterra". But it is not the bright quality of moonlight alone that he experiences for the first time here; he notices above all the effects of moonlight on buildings, monuments and statues, the way in which it obscures detail and shows up the massive contours of Italian architecture, the clean lines of the Frascati villas and the definition of light and shade in the buildings of Rome and the Italian landscape. And in Italy he is attracted by the phenomenon of moonlight reflected in water, and of the juxtaposition of moon-



light and artificial light which he knew from the paintings of Elsheimer; it is with the eye of a painter that he examines the reflection of light on the waves, the shape and perspective of the reflection and the quality of light it produces. Indeed, it is during the Italienische Reise that Goethe draws and sketches moonlit scenes more frequently, even, than during the early Weimar years -- drawings of buildings, monuments, mountains and coastal landscapes by moonlight.

Finally, in his last night in Rome, it is by full moonlight that Goethe experiences the Summa Summarum of his Italian journey; the description of his walk along the Corso to the Capitol and the Coliseum is among his most memorable and evocative descriptions. The moonlight, and a poem by Ovid, provide the elegiac mood suitable to the moment (the first time moonlight has had this association during the whole stay in Italy), and the whole scene evokes a curious "Schauer" as he visits the ruins, passes the statue of Marcus Aurelius and the arch of Septimius Severus, peers into the depths of the Coliseum and evokes the spirit of the past in the same way as Faust's vision of "der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten" by moonlight in the Wald und Höhle scene which itself clearly reflects this Italian experience.

Goethe's experience of the moon and moonlight in Italy, however, is almost entirely restricted to his



reports and drawings of the journey; his new perception of the bright moon, its effect on buildings and monuments, its reflection in the Mediterranean, does not find its way into his creative works in the same way as the Northern, dim, misty moon had found its application in both literal and figurative form in his creative works of the pre-Italian years, and it is not until very much later, with the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, that Goethe draws substantially on his Italian experience of the moon and moonlight for metaphorical and symbolic expression. Indeed, after the return from Italy, the moon ceases to be a central motif in Goethe's creative work for some time; the part it plays in the Römische Elegien and in the post-Italian epics and idylls is an incidental one. Moreover, it is also during this period that the truly lyrical element as such recedes and virtually disappears from Goethe's work as a whole<sup>4</sup>.

The reasons for this disappearance, or at least abeyance, of the purely lyrical element in Goethe's work have already been hinted at in the course of the study. A full and satisfactory explanation is elusive, and the common enough biographical explanation, that Goethe's lyric poetry disappeared with Frau von Stein and only returned with Marianne von Willemer is hardly satisfactory; clearly, a number of factors contributed



to its absence between the Italian journey and its fairly sudden re-emergence with the West-östliche Divan nearly three decades later.

During the pre-Italian years, too, Goethe had already begun to see lyric poetry as an idiom which exists in and for itself; it has little or no practical application (unless we accept Antonio's evaluation, or devaluation, of art as decoration or ornament) -- as the theatre, for example, does have. The theatre has at least a social function, it is a genre which to some extent bridges the gap between the artist and his audience; the Vorspiel auf dem Theater may not entirely resolve this problem, or serve to bridge the gap, but at least it shows Goethe's awareness of the dramatist's task to cater for the present "Mitwelt" as well as for the "Nachwelt". It is also interesting that Wilhelm Meister should, in the Theatralische Sendung, -- which was being written during the early Weimar years -- choose the theatre as his means of artistic expression and education, and as the vocation by which he can make his contribution to society: the theatrical artist, whether writer, director or actor, has a social, even a moral responsibility which the lyric poet does not have -- and indeed, the early Theaterroman differs little in its essentials from the later Bildungsroman into which



it developed. The lyric poet is the Sänger of the ballad, whose responsibilities are towards no-one, whose art makes no concession or compromise, and who asks for no reward other than his creative gift:

Ich singe, wie der Vogel singt,  
 Der in den Zweigen wohnt;  
 Das Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt,  
 Ist Lohn, der reichlich lohnet ...

This is an attitude which characterises Goethe's pre-Italian poetry rather than that of his post-Italian "classical" period, of the period of his friendship with Schiller, of his scientific studies and his ballads, Xenien, elegies and epistles. It is a problematical attitude which characterises above all Tasso, his attempts and his failure to come to terms with social reality. It is the attitude which reaches its most profoundly tragic expression in the figure of the Harfner, who in the Theatralische Sendung stands for the lyric poet as opposed to the dramatist or narrative writer, and in the pathological figure of Mignon, whose songs are the purest form of lyric poetry, but whose lyricism dissolves into an aching nostalgia, into a crisis which can only prove fatal to the victim of this unrealisable Sehnsucht.

It seems that during the pre-Italian years in Weimar Goethe experienced what we might term the crisis



of the lyric poet; for in the songs of Mignon and the Harfner the lyrical element in his works reaches a stage of non plus ultra, a stage where the crisis of nostalgia or recollection can only be overcome by a violent upheaval, a flight to a new milieu where the present, the here and now, can claim the full attention of the poet. It is this that we must assume Goethe found in Italy, and which constitutes the most significant experience of the Italienische Reise: a new appreciation of the present moment, a delight in form and harmony which finds its expression in the humour and hedonism of the Roman Elegies, and which is to dominate his work for long after his return from Italy.

A more thorough and scrupulous examination of the precise causes and effects of the Italian experience and of this "crisis of the lyric poet" for Goethe would extend far beyond the scope of the present study, and beyond my immediate purpose here. It can only be suggested that with the return from Italy the moon, the image which had above all been associated with the lyrical mood in Goethe's earlier works, with suggestion and recollection, with past, present and future nostalgia, disappears from the creative works as a significant leitmotif at the same time and to the same extent as the lyrical element as a whole disappears from his work;



and it is not until the renewal of the lyrical impulse in the romantic love-poetry of his old age that the moon re-emerges as a leitmotif in his imaginative oeuvre.

Meanwhile, the moon does claim Goethe's attention, not as a poetic image but as a natural phenomenon. Indeed, his interest in nature as a field of scientific study rather than in its aesthetic or lyrical application dates from earlier than these years following the Italian journey; we have seen how during the second Schweizer Reise Goethe had noted with more than passing interest the effects of moonlight on mist and cloud -- an interest which is developed fully in the Farbenlehre and in his study of "Mondhöfe" in the Witterungslehre and later. And these scientific observations in turn find their application in the symbolism of his later creative works, notably in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht and in the cloud-symbolism of his late lyrics and of Faust II. It was in the pre-Italian years in Weimar too that Goethe had begun to see nature with the eye of the geologist, the botanist and the student of human geography rather than that of the lyric poet.

These early quasi-scientific interests are developed fully and passionately by Goethe during the two decades following his return from Italy -- and indeed they never cease to preoccupy him for the rest of his



life. The moon attracts his interest as a meteorologist, as a student of optics, and above all as an astronomer; his remark to Schiller is most revealing, and indicates that Goethe himself is fully conscious of the change that has taken place in his attitude towards natural phenomena: "Es war eine Zeit, wo man den Mond nur empfinden wollte, jetzt will man ihn sehen" -- a remark which is characteristic enough of the thinker of these years, who was intent on "Schauen", not "Schwärmen".

It is also in the period between the return from Italy and the writing of the West-östliche Divan that Goethe writes the greater part of his later narrative works; these years see the appearance of the epics and ballads, of Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, of Die Wahlverwandtschaften and the beginning of work on the Wanderjahre. The image of the moon clearly has a less significant function in these prose-works than in the lyrics, or than in dramas like Tasso and Faust; but at times it does act as more than simply part of the scenic background against which the narrative is set. This is true of three episodes in particular, in all of which the moon has some form of symbolic, or at least highly associative function: in the scene by the lake between Eduard and Ottilie in Die Wahlverwandtschaften, in the



farewell scene by moonlight on the shore of Lake Maggiore in the Wanderjahre, and in the skating scene from Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren -- these last two scenes, moreover, dating from later than the composition of the Divan.

Common to all these scenes is a certain confusion of feeling which seems to be associated with the quality of the moonlight: in Die Wahlverwandtschaften, the mysterious affinity between Eduard and Ottilie; in the scene by Lake Maggiore the "Erschütterung" and "allgemeine Rührung" of the characters in the "Vorgefühl des Scheidens" and the dramatic effect of the memory of Mignon and the sound of her song; and most clearly of all in the scene on the ice, in the moonlight reflected on the frozen surface of the lake, the mysterious figure of the skater against a background of dim, flickering light and shade, and the whole confusion of the "inneren Gestalt der drei, nunmehr nächtlich auf der glatten Fläche im Mondschein Verirrten, Verwirrten". And common to the two scenes from the Wanderjahre is an evocation of "das Magische" of a moonlit night -- an element which has echoes of other narrative and lyrical descriptions of moonlight in Goethe's works, of the last night in Rome, of the Vollmondnacht of the Divan and of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht; the transparent, inner light of the moon



seems associated above all with a mood of dream, suggestion, magic and fantasy, the "Geflimmer" of reflected light opens up an introverted aspect of thought and emotion which An den Mond had already explored in "das Labyrinth der Brust".

The West-Östliche Divan marks the re-appearance of the moon as a lyrical leitmotif in Goethe's works, as it marks the re-emergence of the lyrical element as a whole in this "temporäre Verjüngung". And though the Eastern inspiration of this rejuvenation was short-lived, was soon cast off, as Goethe puts it, like a snake's skin, the lyrical impulse, and with it the image of the moon, remains with him for the rest of his life. The image of the moon in the Divan poems is, moreover, unique in Goethe's works; although certain themes and associations -- the notion of "Spiegelung" in the imagery of sun and moon, and the theme of lovers trysting by full moon -- are not entirely restricted to this collection, the moon-imagery as a whole betrays the Eastern inspiration of the lyrics. This is seen to some extent in the playful allegories of Hatem and Suleika, where the moon is used as an analogy for the beloved, who appears as "mein Mondgesicht", "mein Mond", or indeed as any image of light and brightness that the poet calls to mind. There are here distinct parallels with Hafiz



and the Persian poets, in whose work the moon is similarly and profusely used to describe male or female charms. More than anything else, however, the exotic assonances and distilled sensuality of Vollmondnacht make this stand out as the most heavily-coloured "Oriental" verse that Goethe ever wrote.

In the later nature-lyrics, however, the moon emerges as a more typically Goethean leitmotif, as a symbol of light in poems which are more than anything else expressions of the triumph of light over darkness. The moonlight in these late lyrics is not the polar opposition to darkness; Goethe's symbolic thinking at this stage more than ever saw light and darkness as complementary rather than hostile polarities -- as he expresses it in the Sprüche from Gott, Gemüt und Welt:

Und so bleibt auch, in ewigem Frieden,  
Die Finsternis vom Licht geschieden.  
Daß sie miteinander streiten können,  
Das ist eine bare Torheit zu nennen.  
Sie streiten mit der Körperwelt,  
Die sie ewig auseinander hält.

The balance of light and dark, day and night, runs through the late moon-lyrics; through the progression of light from stars to Northern Lights to full moonlight in Um Mitternacht, through the vigils of the elves' chorus in Faust II, through the moonrise in Dämmerung senkte sich von oben and the triumphant hailing of full moonlight



in Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde. Light in these poems becomes a symbol of Goethe's quasi-religious affirmation of life itself; as Danckert points out, "Goethes Lieblingsphäre ist das Element, wo Licht und Finsternis einander begegnen" <sup>5</sup> -- not utter darkness, nor the "Flammenübermas" of full sunlight, but the intermediate sphere of colours, of the "farbigen Abglanz" or of moonlight and starlight. This affirmation finds its profoundest expression in lyrics of light and darkness -- in Der Bräutigam, in Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen, in Dem aufgehenden Vollmonde and in An Werther:

Des Menschen Leben scheint ein herrlich Los,  
Der Tag wie lieblich, so die Nacht wie groß!

This is the symbolism of the moon-imagery of the late lyrics in the most general terms; more specifically, the associations of the image within its different contexts vary from poem to poem. What is remarkable here is how the moon in these lyrics has distinct echoes of the associations of the image as it had appeared in the early works: in the imagery of the "Lebenslied", Um Mitternacht, in the reflection of the moon and stars in the lake in the Notturmo of the elves' chorus and in Die Erleuchtung sankte sich von oben. Earlier, the symbolism of the reflection of the moon and stars had been clear enough: the reflection of the divine and the



eternal in the human and the transient. The symbolic reference of the same imagery in the later poems is at once more profound and more elusive; the peace and regeneration through Lethe, the assurance and cosmic order associated here as before with the light of the moon, only reaches its fullest expression when it is reflected "doppelt schöner", "doppelt leuchtend", from the waters of the lake. The relation between "oben" and "unten" is the same; but the symbolic reference is that of the true symbol, whose meaning, "selbst in allen Sprachen ausgesprochen, doch unaussprechlich bleibt". And in spite of the analogies between the associations of this later moon-imagery and the earlier imagery, we should not be misled by the language and expression of Dämmerung senkte sich von oben into assuming that here Goethe is harking back to the personified "Luna", to the trivial or ironical mood of the Leipzig lyrics or the Roman Elegies, any more than he is with the "Luna" of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht. For in spite of the "spielend-dekoratives" element of the lyric, as Rilke put it, which betrays its Far-Eastern influence, the image of the moon in both the late lyric and the Walpurgisnacht belongs firmly in the context of the symbolic system of his late works.

In the same way, the image of the moon in the Klass-



ische Walpurgisnacht represents in many ways the ultimate expression of the symbolic associations it has accrued through the course of Goethe's creative career, the distillation of many previous applications and references. Here the moon is perceived and expressed as a natural object, as a presiding mythological deity, as a symbol of the inner fantasy-world of myth and of the timeless nature of the mythical sphere which it evokes and over which it shines more and more brightly as the scene progresses. In this symbol are concentrated visual associations of Italy and of other landscapes of Goethe's experience, traditional and mythological lunar associations, and the whole wealth of association which derives from the personal symbolism which the moon has and has had for Goethe during his whole life. It is true enough that we must approach the Klassische Walpurgisnacht bearing in mind the wilful irony with which Goethe's imagination often uses the material at his disposal; and indeed the confused, dark world of archaic mythical figures represented in the episode seems to belong to the element peculiarly suited to it: to the unreal, fantastic light of the moon which presides over the mystery of the Meerfest, which gives way to the sphere of sunlight and full consciousness in Act III.



It is hoped that this conclusion, that the motifs and symbols of Goethe's late works, and indeed of his whole work, are part of an organic system, and can only be fully assessed and appreciated when seen both in the light of their immediate context and in the perspective of the development of his motifs and symbols throughout his work, will have justified the aim with which this study of the image of the moon was undertaken. It appears that the study of a poet's use of image, motif and symbol must take into account not only biographical, psychological and other extrinsic criteria, but must above all see the "Logik der Motive" which is more than anything else intrinsic to a poet's use of imagery, the "Symbol- und Bildnetz" which runs through his work and which betrays the system of "einander gegenübergestellten und sich gleichsam ineinander abspiegelnden Gebilden" through which Goethe claims "den geheimen Sinn dem Aufmerkenden zu offenbaren".



THE IMAGE OF THE MOON IN GOETHE'S WORKS

by

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Appendix

An den Mond: controversy and criticism



This appendix is intended to be read as a supplement to the analysis of An den Mond in chapter three, and deals with the history of critical controversy surrounding the poem, which has been almost exclusively concerned with two questions. These are, firstly, whether the first version of Goethe's poem contains, in the line "Er vom Tode schwillt", a reference to the death of Fräulein von Laßberg, who was drowned in the Ilm on 17th January 1778, and secondly, whether Charlotte von Stein's version of the poem predates or postdates Goethe's second version -- that is, whether he took Frau von Stein's version as a model for his revision of the poem, or whether her version is a parody based on Goethe's revised version. The first consideration in this discussion must be an attempt to ascertain the dates of composition of Goethe's own two versions of the poem -- questions which, if resolved, might possibly put an end to the controversy, but which, being very difficult, if not impossible, to answer, are the issues which have raised most dust in this matter.

The date of the first version of the poem, it seems, cannot possibly be fixed; according to Julius Petersen, the oldest form of the poem was found, set



to music by Philipp Christoph Kayser, placed between Goethe's two letters to Frau von Stein dated 17th June, 1778<sup>1</sup>. The person responsible for this arrangement of the letters was presumably Charlotte's son Fritz, or his nephew Karl, and it is Fritz von Stein who seems to have been first responsible for referring the poem to the drowning of Fräulein von Lasberg by his comment that in the revised version Goethe had "die lokale Beziehung auf die unglücklich liebende Christel verwischt"<sup>2</sup>. Wukadinovic brings the first version into closer connexion with the suicide by claiming that the poem and the musical setting were placed by Charlotte in Goethe's letter of 19th January, 1778, which deals explicitly with the death of Christel; Goethe tells how he helped to erect a monument to her overlooking the Ilm, and the same letter contains the passage which has often been taken as closely connected with the poem itself:

Diese einladende Trauer hat was  
gefährlich anziehendes wie das Wasser  
selbst, und der Abglanz der Sterne des  
Himmels der aus beyden leuchtet lockt uns.

1. J. Petersen, "Goethes Mondlied", DVLG, 1 (1923). pp. 269-70.
2. Cf. Spiridion Wukadinovic, "Das Weimarer Mondlied und Charlotte von Stein", in: Wukadinovic, Goethe-probleme, Halle, 1926, p. 13.



In these lines, claims Wukadinovic, "sagt Goethe ... dasselbe, was er, nur stärker und geheimnisvoller, in seinem Gedicht andeutet" <sup>3</sup>.

Any conclusions regarding this correlation of poem and experience would have to be based on proof that the poem was in fact written after the death of Fräulein von Laßberg. Here, it seems, those commentators who insist on the connexion are on weaker ground, and must base their conclusions on purely speculative interpretations of the mood and imagery of the poem. Thus Litzmann asserts on the flimsiest evidence that the image of the drowned woman "in diesem Augenblick vor Goethes Seele steht, und da ist es so wundervoll selbstverständlich und natürlich, wenn er in selben Augenblick, das Bild der Geliebten und alles dessen, was sie ihm ist und er ihr, im stärksten Kontrast empfindend, aus der Fülle der Liebe ihr zuruft, aus ihrer Seele sprechend: Selig, wer sich vor der Welt ohne Haß verschließt ..." <sup>4</sup>.

More recently, C.W. Eastman<sup>5</sup> goes further than either Wukadinovic or Litzmann -- who both agree that only the first version has any reference to the suicide,

3. Ibid... p. 14.

4. Berthold Litzmann, Goethes Lyrik, Berlin, 1903, p. 109.

5. C.W. Eastman, "Goethe's Mondlied", MLN, 55 (1940), pp. 509-512.



since the words "vom Tode schwillt" were excluded in Goethe's revision -- and claims that whereas the first version of the poem was a love-song written to Charlotte von Stein, with a passing reference to the drowning, the second version has nothing to do with Charlotte, but everything to do with the drowned girl -- in fact, it is in the form of a lament put into the mouth of Christel von Lasberg herself! Thus Eastman sees "der Liebsten Auge" (l.7) and "du" (l.9) in the first version as references to Charlotte von Stein, and the "vom Tode schwillt" (l.14) as referring to the suicide. In the second version, however, the change from the feminine "der Liebsten Auge" to the masculine "des Freundes Auge" shows that it is a woman speaking in the second version; in other words, the "Freund" is the unfaithful lover of Fräulein von Lasberg.

Such speculative and incomplete explanations have become increasingly rare in modern criticism, which has tended in any case to deal less with biographical references in the poem. Korff<sup>6</sup> is one of the few who still insist on the connexion between the first version and the suicide, but does not produce any more convincing

6. H.A. Korff, Goethe im Bildwandel seiner Lyrik. Hanau/M., 1958, Vol.1, p. 205.



or conclusive evidence for his assumption; he too sees the second version as free from any reference to the suicide: "... Und da Goethe das Gedicht jetzt publizieren und es damit zu einem öffentlichen, d.h. allgemein verständlichen Gedichte machen wollte, war es notwendig, die unverständliche Beziehung der ersten Fassung zu dem Tode der unglücklichen Christel von Laßberg zu tilgen" <sup>7</sup>. Goethe, of course, could hardly have foreseen that the "unverständliche Beziehung" was to be only too clear to future generations of readers who cared to look for such a connexion, nor that the simple expedient of referring more precisely to the dates of composition of his poems would have (or might have) settled the issue once for all.

Clearly, if it could be proved that the poem was in fact written before 17th January, 1778, then the question would be settled; and critics have not been slow to interpret the evidence accordingly <sup>8</sup>. Many see the introduction of the suicide in connexion with the poem as "eine nachträgliche Auslegung der Frau von Stein" <sup>9</sup>.

7. Ibid... p. 232.

8. Among critics who have taken up a position against Litzmann, Wukadinovic, Eastman and Korff in this matter are Körner, Kosmann, Joachim Müller, Petersen, Spieß, Elema, Baumgart and Staiger.

9. Thus E.F. Kosmann, "An den Mond", GJb. XXV (1904), p. 225.



a tradition perpetuated by her son Fritz and by various critics. Walzel makes the salutary observation that to interpret the poem in the light of the suicide would make the two lines which make up the reference central to the poem, and thus obscure more relevant interpretations; and Kosmann suggests that had it been written so shortly after the death of Fräulein von Lasberg as some maintain -- most narrow it down to a space of three days or so -- and if it was indeed influenced by this event, then the experience would have shown through in the poem rather more clearly than in a passing reference in the image of the wintry river.

Petersen, in a detailed examination of the very scanty evidence for the dating of the poem, comes very definitely to the conclusion that it must have been written before the death of Fräulein von Lasberg. His proof rests on the assumption that the music to which the poem was set was in fact by Kayser<sup>10</sup>. The earliest definite evidence of the existence of the poem is found in a receipt made out by Johann Michael Wiener, the

10. Until late in the present century, it was widely believed that the original melody to which the poem was set was not by Kayser but by Siegmund von Seckendorff. Hermann Baumgart's daughter argues convincingly in the appendix to his first volume (Goethes lyrische Dichtung, Vol.1, pp. 337-9) that the melody is Kayser's; definite proof was provided in 1931 by Heinrich Spieß (see below).



Weimar court oboist, for a fee received for copying out sheets of Goethe's poems which had been set to music by both Kayser and Seckendorff. Wiener had already given a receipt for 24 sheets on 13th December, 1777; a second receipt, dated 9th March, 1778, was for a further 36 sheets. The poem An den Mond is listed as No. 68 on sheet 28 -- hence was copied by Wiener before 9th March, 1778. Now, between the writing of the poem and Wiener's receipt the poem must have been sent to Zürich, where Kayser was living; set to music; returned from Zürich to Weimar and copied out by Wiener. All this, claims Petersen, would have been impossible in the 18th century in the space of time between 17th January and 9th March, 1778.

Unfortunately, Petersen's careful calculations have been invalidated by the discovery by Heinrich Spies <sup>11</sup> that the melody by Kayser which accompanied Goethe's poem in fact existed before 17th January, 1778, and even, possibly, before Goethe wrote the poem. Spies shows that the melody was originally composed as the setting for Heinrich Leopold Wagner's poem An den Mond:

11. H. Spies, "Philipp Christoph Kayser und Goethes Notenheft vom Jahre 1778", JdGG, 17 (1931), pp. 132-153.



Unbewölktet Silberlicht,  
 Heiligkeusche Mond,  
 Leuchte keinem Bösewicht,  
 In dem Falschheit thront ...

-- which has exactly the same metre as Goethe's poem.

This poem by Wagner was set to music by Kayser (a friend of Wagner, as of Goethe), and the text and melody were published in Kayser's Gesänge mit Begleitung des Klaviers in 1777.

This discovery not only shows that Petersen's calculations were in vain, and not only confirms the assumption of the majority of critics that the melody was in fact by Kayser and not by Seckendorff; it also virtually excludes any prospect of establishing the date of Goethe's poem, for the possibilities for speculation are at once ramified. It could be argued that Goethe knew Kayser's melody before he wrote the poem (in the same metre as Wagner's), hence that the poem could, after all, have been written after the death of Christel von Laßberg, since it did not have to be sent to Zürich for its musical setting. Spieß certainly thinks so<sup>12</sup>;

12. "Der Gedanke liegt nahe, daß auch das Versmaß des Wagnerschen Liedes von Einfluß auf Goethes Schöpfung gewesen sei, nicht aber ein bloßer Zufall hier gewaltet habe. So wäre das matte, sentimentale Erzeugnis der Wagnerschen Muse mitbestimmend für die Entstehung des berühmten Goetheschen Liedes gewesen." (Spieß, ibid., p. 146). It is certainly true that the metre of Goethe's An den Mond is



but it hardly seems likely, assuming the poem was written under the direct influence of the tragedy (which obviously had a profound effect on him<sup>13</sup>), that Goethe would consciously and scrupulously imitate the metre of an exceptionally bad poem. It is, moreover, ironical that Spieß should have made this discovery, and drawn these conclusions from it, only some three years after he had published an article vigorously denying that the poem had any connexion with the suicide -- something he gallantly acknowledges in his later article<sup>14</sup>.

Spieß need not have recanted so radically, however; there is no reason to suppose that even if Goethe knew

12. (contd.) unique in his lyric poetry, as Körner points out (SdpJ. 25, p. 11). Boyd (Notes to Goethe's Poems, Oxford, 1944, Vol. 1, pp. 126-30) does not commit himself either way, but seems to agree with Spieß's conclusions; he is hardly correct, however, in stating that "critics have been fairly unanimous in supposing the poem to have been first inspired by the death of Fräulein von Lasberg" (ibid., p. 126).

13. Cf. the letter to Frau von Stein of 19th January, 1778 (WA.IV.3.207-8).

14. Cf. Spieß, "Nochmals Goethes Mondlied", ZdP. 53 (1928), pp. 74-88. In his later article, Spieß comments: "Durch diese Feststellung wird die Untersuchung über die Entstehungszeit von Goethes Mondlied auf eine ganz neue Basis gestellt ... Damit tritt die alte Tradition [von dem Zusammenhang des Liedes mit dem Selbstmord der Christel von Lasberg] wieder in ihr Recht ... Ich bekenne gern, daß, was ich in dieser Hinsicht in der Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie ... ausgeführt habe, nicht ausreicht, jedermann zu überzeugen..." (JdGG. 17, p. 145, fn.2).



Kayser's melody (and Wagner's text) in 1777, he wrote the poem after 17th January, 1778; Spies's evidence only affords the chronological possibility that the poem was written after the suicide, but establishes no organic connexion between them. It could equally well be argued that Goethe had been attracted by Kayser's melody before January 1778, had noted that it was set to an inferior poem, and had written one of the same title some time during 1777. This would in turn bear out Petersen's suggestion that the poem was referred to in Goethe's letter to Lavater of 14th August, 1777: "Sag Kaysern daß ich ihm das verlangte schicken werde", and that the date of writing "dann wohl in die Vollmondstimmungen der Julinächte dieses Jahres zu setzen wäre" <sup>15</sup>. It could again be argued just as plausibly (or implausibly) that Goethe did not know Kayser's melody or Wagner's poem before he wrote An den Mond, and sent it to Zürich for a musical setting, where Kayser, noticing the (fortuitous) identity of metre, wrote out his ready-made

15. Petersen, DVLG, I, p. 271. Cf. the diary entry for 24th July, 1777 and the letters of 10th July and 17th July, 1777. Petersen goes on to suggest that the manuscript of the poem could have been sent to Charlotte, and referred to, in the letter of 11th August: "... Daß ich mich immer träumend an den Erscheinungen der Natur und an der Liebe zu Ihnen weide, sehn Sie an beykommenden ..." (WA.IV.3.166). He also suggests that the reference to "ein lieblich Lied von [Kayser]" in the letter of 11th November, 1777 could refer to the musical setting for the poem.



composition and packed it off to Weimar with the poem. So Petersen's calculations can be started over again, allowing a correspondingly shorter time at Zürich ...

And so on; the solution to this problem becomes more elusive the more evidence is discovered. On chronological grounds, there is no reason why we should accept or reject the assumption that it was written after 17th January, 1778, that the reference in the poem is to the suicide -- and it would hardly illuminate its interpretation if we were to decide either way<sup>16</sup>. It is certainly grotesque to suggest that the association of the river and death is due to the thought in the

16. Cf. G. Mayer, "Die innere Entwicklung in Goethes Lied An den Mond", *NJWJ*, 4 (1928), p. 721: "Der in den Kommentaren übliche Umweg über die Äußere Entstehungsgeschichte des Gedichts und die ... bloß stückweise feststellbaren biographischen Beziehungen lenkt von der Dichtung, die ein in sich geschlossenes und für sich wirkendes Kunstwerk ist, eher ab, als daß sie deren Verständnis fördert."

At the risk of appearing to favour any attempt to interpret the passage biographically, I would point out that if the poem was in fact written in July 1777, the two lines in question could equally have some bearing on the death of Goethe's sister, mentioned in the letter to Auguste von Stolberg of 17th July, 1777: "... So sang ich neulich als ich tief in einer herrlichen Mondnacht aus dem Flusse stieg der vor meinem Garten durch die Wiesen fließt ... Den Todt meiner Schwester wirst du wissen ..." (WA.IV.3.166). It is true that there is no such immediate and obvious connexion here as in the case of Fräulein von Labberg, who drowned in the Ilm itself, but it is just as probable that the poet's thoughts should turn to death when experiencing a moonlit scene by the river in July 1777 as it would be in January 1778.



poet's mind of Christel von Laßberg's corpse -- Elena rightly dismisses this as a "geschmacklose Meinung" <sup>17</sup> -- or that the reference to "Gespenst" in l.11 refers to the ghost of the dead girl. Staiger's comment that "bei 'vom Tode schwillt' wird wohl an Eis zu denken sein" <sup>18</sup> hardly seems adequate; more satisfactory is the view of Müller <sup>19</sup> and Elena, who see the image in more general terms as referring to "den zugefrorenen und daher winterlich toten Fluß" ... "... der schwillt in der schwarzkalten und toten Winternacht mit eisigem Wasser".

The other chronological problem, which also seems likely to remain unsolved, has less direct bearing on the interpretation of the poem -- unless, that is, we are intent on finding a specific person with whom to identify the "Liebste" and the "Mann" of the first version, and the "Freund" of the second. The question is whether Goethe's revised version was written before or after Charlotte's bitter parody, An den Mond nach meiner Manier; clearly there is a close connexion

17. J. Elena, "Zur Interpretation von Goethes An den Mond", Neophilologus, 46 (1962), p. 41.

18. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 332.

19. Joachim Müller, Wirklichkeit und Klassik, Berlin, 1955, p. 238.



between the two, and it is obvious that one of these later versions took the other as its model. Once again, the issue could be finally settled with reference to the exact dates of composition; and once again, the dates are obscure. Again, critics are sharply divided, though less evenly than on the previous issue, since by far the greater part of critical opinion denies that Charlotte could have been responsible for the changes her version shows from the original version of 1777/78<sup>20</sup>,

Füllest wieder Busch und Tal  
 Still mit Nebelglanz,  
 Lösest endlich auch einmal  
 Meine Seele ganz;

20. According to Wilhelm Bode (Charlotte von Stein, Berlin, 1910, p. 273 fn.), "Urheber der Annahme, das Charlottens Fassung die 'Brücke' zwischen Goethes erster und zweiter Fassung sei, ist Prof. Eugen Wolff, Goethe-Jahrbuch, XXX, s.86ff."; Bode agrees with Wolff, but admits that this "darf nur als Vermutung gelten". K. Rhode has devoted much space to an attempt to prove that Charlotte's version was the model for Goethe's (ChdWGV, 19, p. 13ff. and p. 30ff; 22, p. 12ff. and p. 29ff; 23, p. 31ff; 24, p. 61ff; and 25, p. 23ff); and Petersen (DVLG, 1, p. 269ff.) agrees with him. Gertrud Baumgart's assumption: "Gegen die Rhodesche Vermutung, das Frau von Stein die Urheberin der zweiten Fassung des Liedes sei, ist wohl mit guten Gründen gestritten worden, und ich nehme an, das die Akten hierüber geschlossen sind" (H. Baumgart, Goethes lyrische Dichtung, Vol.1, p. 339), has turned out not to be wholly justified; Boyd, for one, still claims that Charlotte's version was the earlier (op.cit., Vol.1, p. 130ff).



Breitest über mein Gefild  
 Lindernd deinen Blick,  
 Da des Freundes Auge mild  
 Nie mehr kehrt zurück.

Mischet euch in diesen Fluß!  
 Nimmer werd ich froh,  
 So verrauschte Scherz und Kus  
 Und die Treue so.

Jeden Nachklang in der Brust  
 Froh- und trüber Zeit,  
 Wandle ich nun unbewußt  
 In der Einsamkeit.

Selig, wer sich vor der Welt  
 Ohne Haß verschließt,  
 Seine Seele rein erhält,  
 Ahnungsvoll genießt.

Was, den Menschen unbekannt  
 Oder wohl verachtet,  
 In dem himmlischen Gewand  
 Glänzet bei der Nacht.

The dating of either of the two later versions is more difficult than that of the original one; the only clear evidence we have for the composition of Goethe's second version is a terminus ante quem, namely its appearance in Volume 8 of the Göschen edition of Goethe's Schriften in 1788. How long before this it was written is impossible to determine. Petersen again builds up a hypothesis on the basis of vague allusions in the letters<sup>21</sup>, and claims that Charlotte's version was sent

21. Petersen, DVLG, 1. p. 277ff.



to Goethe in Italy late in 1786<sup>22</sup>, and is the subject of Goethe's letter to her of 20th January, 1787: "Ich danke dir fürs Liedchen und für jedes herzliche Andenken" (WA.IV.8.143). So touched was Goethe by this proof of Charlotte's lasting fidelity that he returned the compliment by rewriting her version of the poem, which he then sent back to her, "durchglüht und ausgereift in der südlichen Sonne", in one of the letters of February or March 1788 (many of which are unfortunately lost).

Spieß attacks Petersen for this assumption<sup>23</sup>; if we assume that Charlotte's version was written shortly after Goethe's departure for Italy (a point on which most critics, including Petersen and Spieß agree, and which seems to explain the mood and theme of Charlotte's poem), it is not difficult to find an earlier date for Goethe's version. Clearly, Spieß says, Goethe must have revised many of his lyrics for the 1788 edition of Volume 8 of

22. Oskar Walzel ("Goethes Mondlied", ZdA, 54, 1927, p. 191ff.) cites Goethe's first letter to Charlotte from Italy as referring to her version of the poem: "Das war also alles, was du einem Freunde, einem Geliebten zu sagen hattest, der sich so lange nach einem guten Worte von dir sehnt, der keinen Tag, ja keine Stunde gelebt hat, seit er dich verließ ohne an dich zu denken" (8th December, 1786; WA.IV.8.79). Elena (Neophilologus, 46, p. 35) points out that Charlotte noted a date to one of her poems, Ihr Gedanken, fliehst mich, as: "in Kochberg, im September 1786", and suggests that her version of An den Mond might have been written then.

23. Spieß, ZdP, 53, p. 78ff.



the Schriften; it is also probable that he did most of this work before his departure for Italy. On 15th June, 1786 he writes to Charlotte from Ilmenau saying that he had collected a number of smaller poems under general headings; and Spies concludes that the revised version of An den Mond was among them, agreeing with Litzmann<sup>24</sup> that it was probably the last poem Goethe sent to Charlotte before leaving Weimar. Wukadinovic suggests an even earlier date for the revision, and refers to Goethe's letter to Charlotte from Jena on 13th December, 1785: "Ich habe die schönsten Stunden im freyen gehabt. Das Thal ist im Nebel und halb Lichte gar schön ..." (WA.IV.7.140). This, claims Wukadinovic, "war eine solche Stimmung, aus der das Mondlied reifen könnte" <sup>25</sup>.

A further argument against the attribution of the revised version to the inspiration of Frau von Stein is based on less conclusive, but for all that more convincing evidence than the dating of the two versions. Staiger deals shortly with the question, and argues that Charlotte, "die sonst nur unerquickliche Proben dichterischer Tätigkeit abgelegt hat", was incapable of those changes from the original version which are found in

24. Litzmann, Goethes Lyrik, p. 110f.

25. Wukadinovic, op. cit., p. 22.



Goethe's second version, and points out the discrepancy between the "grämlich frommen Töne, die einzig ihrer Fassung angehören" and the more successful changes which could only have been made by Goethe<sup>26</sup>. This conclusion does not, of course, help to explain the problems posed by Goethe's revision -- namely, whether it is a woman who is speaking, the poet himself, or whether it is a dialogue between man and woman, and so on. As Staiger puts it, "In Geisterduft und Nebelglanz bleibt das Geheimnis eingehüllt".

Controversy concerning the dating of the poem, and in particular the Spieß versus Petersen conflict, seems on both sides to constitute a classic example of the attempt to find objective proof to corroborate a subjective theory, except that in this case the "proof" is as elusive and inconclusive as it possibly could be. For both Petersen's and Spieß's searching for dates is only supplementary to their interpretations of the respective versions of Goethe and Charlotte; and this particular form of interpretation is one which has given rise

26. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, pp. 332-3. Mukadinovic puts the same point more violently, claiming that in the passages unique to Charlotte's version "kommt das unsäglich Prosaische im Schaffen dieser illegitimen Tochter Apolls in voller Deutlichkeit zum Ausdruck" (op. cit., p. 27).



to further ramification of opinion.

Petersen explains the change from the first to the second version of Goethe's poem as follows: "Aus dem männlichen Liebeslied ist die Klage einer verlassenen Frau, aus dem subjektiven Erkenntnis ein objektives Rollenlied, aus dem persönlich Erlebten ein fremder Erlebnisreflex geworden" <sup>27</sup>. He explains that Goethe hardly had occasion to express the elegiac sentiments of the revised version either during his period of happiness in Weimar with Frau von Stein, or in the excitement of discovery during the Italienische Reise; Charlotte, on the other hand, had every reason to experience and express such feelings <sup>28</sup>.

Petersen's insistence on seeing the poem as a Rollenlied is due to his desire to interpret the revised version of the poem from a biographical point of view -- and in this he is joined by many other critics. Petersen's own explanation is that Goethe took over the first five stanzas of Charlotte's version with minor changes.

27. Petersen, DVLG. 1. p. 272.

28. As indeed she did; but this hardly proves that Goethe wrote his second version on the basis of experience foreign to him. Are we to assume that Goethe never experienced such feelings before, say, 1787, and was therefore incapable of expressing them? Or even that if he had not experienced them personally, that he was still incapable of expressing them in the form of lyric poetry?



except that he removed the bitter and accusing third stanza, and inserted Charlotte's fifth stanza in its place, whilst keeping the original rhyme of the suppressed third stanza (Herz:Schmerz), in order to use the Brust: gewußt of Charlotte's fifth stanza in his own final one. Thus the first four stanzas of Goethe's revised version must be imagined as being spoken by Charlotte; with the fifth stanza the poet's own voice breaks in, showing the disappointed and bitter woman a means to comfort and relief from her "unausgesprochenen (?) Schmerz", by pointing out the permanence of memory: "... Er gibt ihr ein männliches Lebensgefühl ein, das im Einssein mit der Natur Kraft und Schwung erhält" -- and thus the poem effects the transition from the mood of the opening stanzas to the harmonious coda of the last lines of the original version.

The attempts of critics to interpret Goethe's revised version as a Rollenlied are all based on attempts to explain these significant changes from his original version: from "der Liebsten Auge" to "des Freundes Auge", and from "einen Mann am Busen hält" to "einen Freund am Busen hält". We have already mentioned Litzmann's suggestion that the revised version is a woman's reply to Jägers Abendlied, which had been spoken by a man; this is rejected out of hand by Alfred Biese, who makes



the valid comment: "Goethe hat in dieser letzten Fassung alles Rein-Persönliche getilgt, ... man braucht nichts von Fräulein von Laßberg oder Frau von Stein zu wissen" <sup>29</sup>. Wukadinovic, disputing Petersen's suggestion that only Charlotte, and not Goethe, was in a position to lament broken faith, maintains that it is indeed Goethe speaking in the poem, and that the object of the poem is not specifically Charlotte, but that it has more general reference; here Goethe is looking further back, to his previous loves, Friederike and Lili (among others) from his present position of calm happiness in Weimar<sup>30</sup>.

Other critics have interpreted the "Freund" of Goethe's revised version more literally, and, still insisting on seeing the poem in the light of Goethe's personal experience, put the poem into his own mouth as a hymn in praise of friendship. Litzmann's curious interpretation of the poem as a companion-piece to Jägers

29. A. Biese, "Goethes Mondlied und sein Nachklang bei einer Urenkelin der Frau von Stein", JdGdH, 95 (1916-25), p. 100.

30. "Forderte ihn da sein jetziger Zustand nicht geradezu heraus, die verworrene Vergangenheit an der helleren und reineren Gegenwart zu messen?" (Wukadinovic, op.cit., p. 21). This is all to support Wukadinovic's claim that Goethe's version must have been written before his departure for Italy, and therefore before Charlotte's version. He is undeterred by the apparent change in sex from "Liebste" to "Freund"; he explains simply that for "Freund" in the second version, we must read "Freundin" ... (p. 16f.)



Abendlied is due to the assumption that the "Freund" is used in an erotic sense, therefore that a woman must be speaking; he comes to this conclusion on the grounds that he could find no male friend to whom Goethe was so close at this time as to address a poem to him. Spieß shows<sup>31</sup> that if we insist on finding a specific person with whom to associate either the "Mann" of the first version or the "Freund" of the second, we do not have to look far; Goethe's letters give clear indications of at least two people who qualify: the Duke, "mit dem ich nun schon an die neun Monate in der wahrsten und innigsten Seelenverbindung stehe" (to Kestner, 9th July, 1776; WA.IV.3.61); or Herder, of whom Goethe wrote to Charlotte on the eve of Herder's departure from Weimar: "Ich verliere viel wenn er geht, denn außer dir und ihm wäre ich hier allein" (14th July, 1786; WA.IV.7.247).

There is virtually no limit to the number of such interpretations that can be applied to the revised version of this poem; and such controversy as has arisen

31. Spieß, ZdP, 53, p. 82ff. Besides, Spieß points out, Goethe "hat nie aufgehört, Liebe und Freundschaft als gleichwertige Lebensmächte zu betrachten" (p. 83).



has been largely a result of the insistence on a biographical basis for interpretation, whether critics have set out to prove that Goethe's version preceded or followed Charlotte's, or whether they have seen in references in the poem some correlation with Goethe's own experience. As we have seen, these two factors have often depended on each other for support. Those critics who have ignored this aspect of interpretation, and who have not insisted on seeing the poem as spoken either by Goethe, the man, or by Charlotte, the woman, but have restricted themselves to seeing the poem as the work of Goethe the poet, are on much safer and, we feel, saner ground. Körner, for example, thunders against such "sinnverkehrten Biographismus", and points out that Goethe himself, while not denying the existence of personal biographical elements in his work, warns the reader against attempting to trace them back to actual experience<sup>32</sup>.

It is indeed difficult here to draw the line between intrinsic and extrinsic criticism; for while it seems unedifying to attempt a biographical reading of a poem like An den Mond, (in both its versions), yet

32. J. Körner, "Goethes Mondlied", SdpJ. 25 (1936), p. 22ff; cf. JA.2.284: "Weil nun aber demjenigen, der eine Erklärung meiner Gedichte unternimmt, jene eigentlichen, im Gedicht nur angedeuteten Anlässe nicht bekannt sein können, so wird er den innern, höhern, fasslichern Sinn verwalten lassen."



it is valuable, if not necessary, to take some account of what Elema calls the "psychological relationship" <sup>33</sup> of Goethe and Frau von Stein, and of its effect on Goethe's attitudes and feelings in this early Weimar period -- attitudes and feelings which inevitably and manifestly show through in the development of his lyric poetry. The point of departure, however, will and must remain the poem itself; it is unedifying to enter into argument whether the first version can be associated with the death of Christel von Laßberg, or which of the two later versions influenced the other, all the more so since any conclusions must be subjective and indefinite. It was the purpose of the above examination to show that little or nothing can be decided either way in this matter, and to show how such considerations can result in diametrically opposed conclusions and assessments. They solve none of the problems of unity or interpretation -- which genuinely exist in this poem -- and only ramify the possibilities of interpretation. By ignoring them, we are no nearer a solution to these problems, but at least the way is open to deal with the poem on its own terms, and to consider how far the changes made in the revised version have affected its form and content.

33. J. Elema, Neophilologus, 46, p. 47.



Notes  
to  
Volume One



# Notes to Chapter One

- 1) C. Day Lewis, The Poetic Image, London, 1947, pp. 17-18 and p. 157; cf. Goethe, Faust II, vv. 6287-8:

Gestaltung, Ungestaltung  
Des ewigen Sinnes ewige Unterhaltung.  
(WA.I.15.1.73)

- 2) A. Closs, "Substance and Symbol in Poetry", in: Closs, Medusa's Mirror, London, 1957, p. 24.
- 3) L.A. Willoughby, "Goethe's Imagery", in: E.M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, Goethe as Poet and Thinker, London 1962, pp. 118-132.
- 4) "Man bedenkt niemals genug, das eine Sprache eigentlich nur symbolisch, nur bildlich sei und die Gegenstände niemals unmittelbar, sondern nur in Widerscheine ausdrücke". Goethe, Zur Farbenlehre, WA.II.1.302.
- 5) J. Middleton Murry, "Metaphor", in: Countries of the Mind, Second series, Oxford, 1931, p. 1ff.
- 6) Quoted in: Max Baym, "The present state of the study of metaphor", Books Abroad, XXXV, pp. 215-219, Oklahoma, 1961.
- 7) Murry, op. cit., p.1.
- 8) "A good metaphor implies the intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars" - Aristotle. (Quoted by Murry, op. cit., p. 3).
- 9) "Images ... have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant" - Coleridge. (Quoted by Murry, op. cit., p. 12).
- 10) "Metaphor ... is a stereoscope of ideas; by presenting two different points of view on one idea, it gives the illusion and conviction of solidarity and reality. Thus metaphor adds a new dimension to language". W.B. Stanford, Greek Metaphor, Oxford, 1936, p. 105.



- 11) R. Wellek and A. Warren, Theory of Literature. London, 1954, p. 186. (My italics).
- 12) Murry, op. cit., p. 4.
- 13) Ibid.
- 14) Thus H. Pongs, Das Bild in der Dichtung, Marburg, 1927-39, Vol.1, p. 1ff., and Vol.2, p. 1ff.
- 15) Before dealing with poetic symbolism, a clear distinction must be drawn between the overall, general symbolic character of poetry (and indeed of all art), and the image considered as a poetic figure. Erich stresses this distinction (W. Erich, "Das Problem der Symbolinterpretation im Hinblick auf Goethes 'Wanderjahre'", DVLG, 26 (1952), pp. 331-352), showing that the general symbolic nature of poetry is reflected in the tension between its "real" or "historical" character and its "ideal" or "suprahistorical" character; it is a different kind of symbolism when we consider how the poet has made one particular image, or a number of images, central vehicles of expression, which then run through his work -- such as Hofmannsthal's "Tower". These symbols Erich describes as being to the poet what ideas are to the philosopher.
- 16) Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 189; the term "image" is of course being used here in its narrowest sense.
- 17) W.B. Yeats, Essays, London, 1924, p. 95f.
- 18) Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 300, fn.12.
- 19) C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, Oxford, 1936, pp. 45 and 48:

"As the god Amor and his figurative garden are to the actual passions of men, so perhaps we ourselves and our 'real' world are to something else. The attempt to read that something else through its sensible imitations, to see the archetype in the copy, is what I mean by symbolism or sacramentalism".

"The great allegorist's firm thinking leaves no room for misunderstanding ... Symbolism is a mode of thought, but allegory is a mode of expression".



- 20) Murry, op. cit., p. 4.
- 21) A recent German critic points out the arbitrary nature of the association between image and meaning in allegory, as opposed to the more organic and natural relationship in symbol: "Das Symbol soll mit der Natur völlig übereintreffen, das wahre Verhältnis soll sogleich die Bedeutung aussprechen. Die Allegorie dagegen ist zufällig und willkürlich, sie ist konventionell und beruht auf einer Vereinbarung, die man kennen muß, um ihren Sinn zu verstehen. Das Wissen ist ein Schlüssel zum Verständnis der Allegorie, das Symbol dagegen öffnet sich dem Beschauer, es ist offenes Geheimnis". (P. Schmidt, Goethes Farbensymbolik, Berlin, 1965, pp. 70-71).
- 22) L.A. Willoughby, "The Image of the Wanderer and the Hut in Goethe", Etudes Germaniques, 6 (1951), pp. 208-9.
- 23) Dr. Johnson, Lives of the Poets: Thomson. Quoted by Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 208.
- 24) Among poets who have suffered most from the assessment of their "sincerity" or "insincerity" are, particularly, Heine and Villon.
- 25) Cf. A.F. Palooner, Shakespeare and the Sea. London, 1964, pp. 147-8.
- 26) Willoughby, "Goethe's Imagery", p. 127.
- 27) Quoted by Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 79.
- 28) C. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and what it tells us, Cambridge, 1935.
- 29) C. Spurgeon, "Leading Motives in the Imagery of Shakespeare's Tragedies" (1930), reprinted in: Anne Bradby, Shakespeare Criticism 1919-1935. London, 1936, pp. 18-61. It is in the first part of her book ("The Revelation of the Man") that Miss Spurgeon concentrates on the amassing of biographical evidence, and it is consequently at this part of her work that most adverse criticism has been directed.



- 30) Lillian H. Hornstein, "Analysis of Imagery: a critique of literary method", PMLA, LVII (1942), p. 40. For a similar critique of Miss Spurgeon's method, cf. Mario Praz's review, English Studies, XVIII (1936), pp. 177-181.
- 31) Lillian Hornstein, op. cit., pp. 652-3.
- 32) W. Erich, "Das Problem der Symbolinterpretation" (cf. note 15 above), and "Symbolinterpretation und Mythenforschung: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen eines neuen Goetheverständnisses", Euphorion, 47 (1953), pp. 38-67. Both essays reprinted in: W. Erich, Protest und Verheißung, Frankfurt & Bonn, 1960.
- 33) W. Erich, Die Symbolik von Faust II, Berlin, 1943 (Dritte durchgesehene Auflage, Frankfurt & Bonn, 1964).
- 34) Notably Richard Beitzl, Das Bild der Landschaft in Goethes Kunstepos, Diss., Berlin, 1929, and W. Müller, Die Erscheinungsform des Wassers bei Goethe, Diss., Erlangen, 1917.
- 35) Kurt May, Faust II, Teil in der Sprachform gedeutet, Berlin, 1936, p. 192.
- 36) H.W. Wells, Poetic Imagery, New York, 1924.
- 37) Ibid., pp. 36-7. It would seem that Wells's study, in spite of his "formal" classification, also has, ultimately, a biographical motive -- which is, therefore, not confined to content analysis alone.
- 38) "Die Sprachanalyse weist wohl hin auf ein Problem ...., aber sie kann die Lösung des Problems selbst nicht mehr leisten". Erich, Symbolik von Faust II, p. 23.
- 39) C. Brooke-Rose, A Grammar of Metaphor, London, 1958.
- 40) Ibid., p. 14.
- 41) Ibid., p. 215. Cf. also pp. 247-8: "The adjective, though effective in metaphor, seems to me unsatisfactory, not merely because it can be abused, ...



but because its function is itself imprecise; it hovers uneasily between noun and verb ... It does, however, have the strength of either ... Discreetly used, it may be forceful and effective" (My italics). It must be pointed out that Miss Brooke-Rose is quite aware that she is "encroaching on idea-content" here (p. 216).

- 42) Cf. Miss Brooke-Rose's concluding chapter, p. 287ff. A recent study of Proust's imagery based on a "computing" analysis of images (Victor E. Graham, Proust's Imagery, Oxford, 1966) deals more with subject-matter than Miss Brooke-Rose's book; but the object is similar, and the results are expressed either in the form of statistical tabulation (cf. pp. 257-264), or in the form of very general statements, e.g. "Proust chooses his images consciously, whether they are brief and incidental or long and fundamental ... Statistics reveal that the images in A la Recherche du Temps perdu are typically visual, logical or concrete ... It is largely through images that Proust reaches the universal plane ... etc" (pp. 254 & 256). Dr. Graham claims for his method that although it "gives rise to certain anomalies ... it eliminates the subjective element in evaluation" (p. 4), but evidently sees his "objective" method again as a means to an end: "The analysis only becomes truly useful, however, when the technique leads to a more accurate evaluation of the reconstituted elements" (p. 9). At best, this method can give us a mass of information on the frequency and nature of Proust's imagery; at worst, it can only offer sterile tabulation of, and comment on, images with little or no reference to their wider context, or generalisations based on one element in the whole style of an author.
- 43) C.G. Jung, "The Child Archetype", para. 301. (Jung, Collected Works, ed. H. Read, M. Fordham and G. Adler, London, 1959, Vol.9, Part I, p. 179). Cf. also Jolan Jacoby, "Komplex, Archetypus und Symbol", Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Psychologie, IV (1945).
- 44) Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry. Oxford, 1934.
- 45) Ibid. p. 1. Cf. also Jung, Seelenprobleme der Gegenwart, Zürich, 1931, p. 69f: "Wer mit Urbildern



spricht, spricht wie mit tausend Stimmen ...  
es ist, wie wenn Saiten in uns berührt würden,  
die sonst nie klangen."

- 46) Cf. Emrich, Symbolik von Faust II. p. 26, who takes Konrad Burdach to task for interpreting Goethe a) on the basis of biographical clues, and b) on the basis of historical or mythological antecedents -- e.g. the poem Abglanz is interpreted by Burdach in the light of the Marianne Willemer episode, and he sees various motifs in Faust II (Euphorion's cloak, Helena's dress and veil, etc.), as well as the "Mantel gesäter Sterne" of the West-östliche Divan as "aus antiken, hellenistischen Sternensagen stammend" (K. Burdach, Vorspiel, Halle, 1926, Vol.2, p. 437).
- 47) Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 208 (my italics).
- 48) Pongs, op. cit., Vol.2, p. 457.
- 49) Ibid., Vol.2, p. 88
- 50) K. Kerényi, Das ägäische Fest. Erläuterungen zur Szene "Felsbuchten des ägäischen Meers" in Faust II. Wiesbaden, 1950, and W. Danckert, Goethe: der mythische Urgrund seiner Weltanschauung, Berlin 1951. Danckert sees Goethe's "Grundsymbole" (Granite, Veil, Light, Cave, etc.) as "alte Natursymbole, Bestandstücke der pelagischen Urmythologie. Der Dichter wiederentdeckt sie rein intuitiv, nur geleitet von der Befähigung gesteigerter Bildempfänglichkeit" (p. 326). More recently, Gottfried Diener has published an exhaustive and thorough analysis of the first two acts of Faust II, in which he examines motifs and symbols not only in the perspective of Goethe's own works, of his "Symbol- und Bildnetz", which Emrich regards as the chief, indeed the sole, criterion for symbol-study, but also very much from a Jungian standpoint: "Denn es gibt kaum ein Bild in Faust, das nicht in gleichem oder ähnlichem Zusammenhang in anderen poetischen oder theoretischen Werken Goethes zu finden wäre, und oft genug gibt Goethe zur Deutung des Sinnes selbst den Schlüssel in die Hand. Er hat auch selbst auf diese immer wieder neue Variierung von 'werten Bildern' und 'Motiven' in seiner Einbildungskraft hingewiesen, 'da sie sich denn zwar immer umgestalteten, doch ohne sich zu verändern,



einer reineren Form, einer entschiedeneren Darstellung entgegenreiften'..."; he goes on to explain "gewisse große Motive ... als Niederschlag der 'unzähligen typischen Erfahrungen der Ahnenreihe', die der archetypischen Struktur des kollektiven Unbewussten, ohne Rücksicht auf die Verschiedenheit von Völkern, Rassen und Zeiten, als Möglichkeiten eingeprägt sind"; thus Helena is an archetypal image of the "lebendig wirkenden, zur seelischen Ganzheit führenden Anima", which Faust's Libido pursues through the depths of the unconscious (i.e. in the Gang zu den Müttern and the Abstieg in den Hades). "und belebt dort, was bisher schlummerte." And the union of polarities expressed in the merging of the elements at the very end of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is a notion shared by Goethe "mit einer langen Ahnenreihe von religiös gestimmten Naturphilosophen und Alchemisten, die nicht etwa nur gegenseitig ihre Ideen und Motive einander vererbt, sondern aus der gemeinsamen Quelle der archetypischen Bilderwelt des Unbewussten geschöpft haben" (G. Diener, Fausts Weg zu Helena: Urphänomen und Archetypus, Stuttgart, 1961, pp. 10, 15-16, 397 and 582; Diener's italics).

On the whole question of the interpretation of literary symbols on psychological criteria, Jung himself defends the "archetypal" interpretation of certain literary works, such as Goethe's Faust II and Nietzsche's Zarathustra. He defines these works as "naive" or "extraverted" products of the imagination, which are precisely unwitting betrayals of the subconscious of the poet, as opposed to works which are products of the "sentimental" or "introverted" imagination (such as Schiller's dramas), which are not suited to psychological interpretation since they are by and large the result of the highly conscious ends and aims of the poet. At the same time, he refutes the Freudian interpretation of works of art on the grounds that this approach analyses only the man behind the work of art, not the creative genius. (Cf. Jung, "Psychologie und Dichtung", in: Gestaltung des Unbewussten, Zürich, 1950).

- 51) Emrich, "Problem der Symbolinterpretation", p. 332.
- 52) Cf. M. Marache, Le Symbolisme dans la Pensée et l'Oeuvre de Goethe, Paris, 1960, who comments:



"Goethe est un Pélasgue, un Tellurien transporté au début du 19ème siècle", and continues: "... bien entendu, il s'y sent peu à l'aise, encore qu'il se constitue toute une société de Pélasgues attardés (Schelling, Carus, Bachofen ... et Mozart!)" (p. 10).

- 53) Cf. Willoughby, "Goethe's Imagery", p. 120.
- 54) "Wird das Bild selbst wieder mit anderen Bildern umschrieben und gedeutet, so wird der Abgrund zwischen Dichtung und Deutung noch größer": Erlich, "Problem der Symbolinterpretation", p. 332.
- 55) Ibid., p. 331.
- 56) To Riemer, August 5th, 1810. Cf. Goethes Gespräche, ed. F. von Biedermann, Leipzig, 1909-11, Vol.2, p. 84.
- 57) Willoughby, "Goethe's Imagery", p. 123. Cf. also Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 207: "It may be questioned whether a poet has ever been so uncritical of his images".
- 58) Marache, op. cit., p. 7.
- 59) It might also be pointed out here that the evidence of poets themselves seems to contradict the notion that images are uncensored by the conscious faculty of the artist. Coleridge, C. Day Lewis and Stephen Spender are very much aware of the part played by the conscious memory, however involuntarily, in the formulation of images. J. Livingstone Lowes (The Road to Xanadu, Boston, 1927, p. 177), speaking on the very subject of Coleridge's moon-imagery, shows how immediate sense-impressions are "supported", to quote Coleridge, "by the images of memory flowing in on the impulses of immediate impression" (Coleridge, Anima Poetas, ed. E.H. Coleridge, London, 1895, p. 45).  
C. Day Lewis (op. cit., pp. 139-40) quotes Stephen Spender (The Saturday Book, 1945): "It is perhaps true to say that memory is the faculty of poetry, because the imagination itself is an exercise of the memory. There is nothing we imagine which we do not already know. And our ability to imagine is our ability to remember what we have



already experienced and to apply it to some different situation'. The last phrase should be noted. It is partly because his experience must be imaginatively applied by the poet to some different situation, that in poetry memories are metaphorical, are given the weight and depth of images" (Lewis's italics).

- 60) Enrich, "Symbolinterpretation und Mythenforschung", p. 42ff., and Symbolik von Faust II, p. 29ff and passim.
- 61) Cf. R.D. Gray, Goethe the Alchemist, Cambridge, 1952. More recently still, however, Alice Raphael has attempted to interpret Goethe's alchemical symbolism almost exclusively on the basis of Jungian theory (A. Raphael, Goethe and the Philosopher's Stone, London, 1965).
- 62) Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 193.
- 63) A distinction might be drawn here between two types of "biographical" method: that which seeks in the works of a writer evidence for his (usually obscure) biographical career, and that which draws on extrinsic biographical evidence as an aid to the interpretation of the works themselves. The latter (pace Professor Enrich) may be of some use, or at least interest, to the literary critic; the former hardly at all.
- 64) Willoughby, "Goethe's Imagery", p. 132.
- 65) W.H. Gemen, Shakespeares Bilder: ihre Entwicklung und ihre Funktionen im dramatischen Werk, Bonn, 1936. (= The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery, London, 1951).
- 66) Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross, Oxford, 1907. Vol.2., p. 16.
- 67) C. Day Lewis, op. cit., p. 20.
- 68) Cf. W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy", in: Wimsatt and Beardsley, Essays in Modern Literary Criticism, New York, 1952, pp. 174-189.



- 69) L.A. Willoughby, "The Image of the Horse and Charioteer in Goethe's Poetry", PEGS, XV (1946), and "The Image of the Wanderer and the Hut in Goethe", Etudes Germaniques, 6 (1951).
- 70) Willoughby, "Goethe's Imagery", p. 118.
- 71) " ... The reader might not realise that these images possessed any symbolic value at all, unless he were aware of their use as symbols elsewhere in Goethe's work, and of the persistence with which they followed him throughout his life": Willoughby, "Image of Horse and Charioteer", p. 51.
- 72) Enrich, Symbolik von Faust II, p. 14. Cf. also C. Day Lewis, op. cit., p. 65: "Images are not things apart or complete ... always, in some sense, if the poem is to be a whole and not a series of stabbing, meaningless flashes, a pattern of imagery must be created, a relationship equivalent to that which underlies all reality, living or inanimate."
- 73) W. Schadewaldt, "Zur Entstehung der Elfenzene im zweiten Teil des Faust", in: Schadewaldt, Goethe-studien, Zürich & Stuttgart, 1963, pp. 251-262. Cf. also below, p. 278ff.
- 74) To Iken, 27th September, 1827 (WA.IV.43.83). As far as the so-called "extrinsic" or "intrinsic" approach to his works is concerned, Goethe has, typically enough, given varying encouragement at various times; apart from the notorious statement that his works are "Bruchstücke einer großen Konfession" (JA.23.82-3), the student who looks to Goethe for a guide to the interpretation of his works will find the following not wholly consistent remarks less than useful:
- "Alle meine Gedichte sind Gelegenheitsgedichte, sie sind durch die Wirklichkeit angeregt und haben darin Grund und Boden" (J.P. Eckermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. H. Düntzer, Leipzig, 1899, Part I, p. 50; 18th September, 1823).
- "Natur- und Kunstwerke lernt man nicht kennen, wenn sie fertig sind; man muß sie im Entstehen aufhaschen, um sie einigermaßen zu begreifen" (To Zelter, 4th August, 1803, WA.IV.16.265-6).

"Ich habe nun noch eine besondere Qual, daß



gute, wohlwollende, verständige Menschen meine Gedichte auslegen wollen und dazu die Specialissima, wober und woran sie entstanden seyen, zu eigentlicher Einsicht unentbehrlich halten, anstatt daß sie zufrieden seyn sollten, daß ihnen irgend Einer das Speciale so in's Allgemeine emporgehoben, damit sie es wieder in ihre eigene Specialität ohne Weiteres aufnehmen können" (to Zelter, 27th March, 1830; WA.IV.46.286).

- 75) This very salutary point is raised by Hans Pyritz in his on the whole favourable review of Emrich's Symbolik von Faust II:

"Der Gesichtspunkt, den uns Emrich aufschließt, ist ohne Zweifel von entscheidender Wichtigkeit; und er fügt sich aufs glücklichste in die langsam wachsende Reihe von Bemühungen, die darauf abgestellt sind, die künstlerische Schöpfung aus ihrem ureigensten Existenzgrund zu verstehen. Gerade deshalb darf es bedauert werden, daß Emrich sich abermals, wie gegen die Vergangenheit so nun auch gegen die Zukunft, mit übersteigter Programmatik absondert, indem er die Lösung des Goetheschen Gesamtträtsels, die notwendige Umgestaltung unseres Goethebildes von seiner Methode abhängig macht (S.37). Ich denke, es gehört auch zu den Einsichten, die wir uns teuer erkaufte haben, daß Methoden Arbeitshilfen, aber keine Zauberstäbe sind und daß uns selbst die beste Methode unfrei macht, sobald wir ihr Autonomie und Alleinrecht einräumen. Die Goethe-Welt, ja das Goethe-Werk, erschöpft sich nicht in Symbolen; und das symbolgenetische Verfahren, so außerordentlich fruchtbar es auf dem ihm zugewiesenen Felde zu sein verspricht, würde umgekehrt eine unendliche Verarmung unserer Goethe-Verständnisses zur Folge haben, wenn es die Schlüsselgewalt über die Goethesche Daseinstotalität in Anspruch nähme". Euphorion, 45 (1950), p. 125.

- 76) Cf. Rev. T. Harley, Moon Lore, London, 1885, p. 3 : "It will be confessed that the moon has created more merriment, more marvel, and more mystery, than all of the other orbs taken together." Also Max Förster, "Vom Fortleben alter Samellunare", Annalia, 67/68 (1944), pp. 3-4: "Von allen Gestirnen ist es nun nicht, wie wir vom nordischen Standpunkte aus erwarten sollten, die wärmende und alles lebende hervorrufende Sonne, die die stärkste Aufmerksamkeit des primitiven Menschen auf sich zog, sondern viel-



mehr der Mond." And Werner Wolf, Der Mond im deutschen Volksglauben, Bühl (Baden), 1929, p. 10: "Die Unfasbarkeit und das Grauen der Nacht, in der das Mondlicht scheint, hat auf die Menschen unwillkürlich eine stärkere, die Phantasie weit mehr anregende Wirkung ausgeübt als der Tag und die an ihm strahlende Sonne."

- 77) Cf. C.G. Jung, Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious: "The figures corresponding to Demeter and Hecate are supra-ordinate, not to say over-life-size 'Mothers', ranging from the Pieta type to the Baubo type ... the Earth Mother [archetype] is always chthonic and occasionally related to the moon, either through the blood-sacrifices already mentioned [i.e. the ritual offerings of menstrual blood to the moon], or else because she is adorned with a sickle moon." (Jung, Collected Works, ed. cit., Vol.9, Part 1, p. 185). This archetypal association of the moon with woman is also dealt with by Maud Bodkin in a literary context (op. cit., pp. 70, 164, 290f.); and various authors have drawn attention to the association in anthropology and mythology. Cf. especially Robert Briffault, The Mothers, London, 1927, Vol.II, pp. 572, 578 and 583, and passim: Briffault sees the moon as "the germ of all cosmic religion" (Vol.3, p. 674ff); and Robert Graves, The White Goddess, London, 1961, p. 490, where the moon is associated with the "Great Goddess", or, in Jungian terms, the "Earth-Mother archetype". Esther Harding devotes a whole work to the archetypal associations of the moon -- as a female deity and symbol, as the archetype of woman, the "Great Mother Goddess", and its connexion with rebirth and regeneration in the baptism and water-symbolism associated with it (Woman's Mysteries, ancient and modern, London, 1935). Mircea Eliade deals with the symbolism of the moon in its association with water and sea-shells, which "participent ... aux puissances sacrées concentrées dans les Eaux, dans la Lune, dans la Femme" (Images et Symboles, Paris, 1952, p. 164), and the yin principle of Taoism, which "représente, entre autres, l'énergie cosmique féminine, lunaire, 'humide'." (Ibid., p. 167); and Carl Hentze devotes a chapter of his book to a similar study of "Lune et Eaux, Lune et Fécondité, Lune et Idées de Renouveau" (Mythes et Symboles Lunaires, Anvers, 1932, p. 57ff.)



- 78) Schopenhauer, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.  
Book 3, Chap. 30 ("Vom reinen Subjekt des Erkennens").

"Warum wirkt der Anblick des Vollmondes so wohlthätig, beruhigend und erhebend? Weil der Mond ein Gegenstand der Anschauung, aber nie des Willens ist.

'Die Sterne, die begehrt man nicht,  
Man freut sich ihrer Pracht' -- Goethe.

Ferner ist er erhaben, das heist stimmt uns erhaben, weil er, ohne alle Beziehung auf uns, dem irdischen Treiben ewig fremd, dahinzieht, und alles sieht, aber an nichts Anteil nimmt. Bei seinem Anblick schwindet daher der Wille, mit seiner steten Not, aus dem Bewusstsein, und läst es als ein rein erkennendes zurück. Vielleicht mischt sich auch noch ein Gefühl bei, daß wir diesen Anblick mit Millionen teilen, deren individuelle Verschiedenheit darin erlischt, so daß sie in diesem Anschauen Eins sind, welches ebenfalls den Eindruck des Erhabenen erhöht. Dieser wird endlich auch dadurch befördert, daß der Mond leuchtet, ohne zu wärmen, worin gewiß der Grund liegt, daß man ihn keusch genannt und mit der Diana identifiziert hat. -- Infolge dieses ganzen wohlthätigen Eindrucks auf unser Gemüt wird der Mond allmählich der Freund unseres Busens, was hingegen die Sonne nie wird, welcher, wie einem überschwenglichen Wohltäter, wir gar nicht ins Gesicht zu sehen vermögen."

- 79) Among the more extravagant claims made for the moon's influence are those of G. Massey (Lunolatry. London, 1887), who goes as far as to trace almost the whole structure of Christian theology, which he describes as a "disease of mythology" (p. 24) back to early Middle-Eastern moon-mythology, equating the whole concept of the Resurrection and the Trinity with the process of Lunar Rebirth (i.e. the three days of the new moon), and the Lunar Trinity (i.e. the Diana-Luna-Hecate trinity of classical mythology, itself derived ultimately from early Egyptian and Sumerian mythology); and Bernhard Marr (Symbolik der Lunation. Dux, 1905), perhaps the least restrained of all, who sees "die Lunationerscheinungen als Grundursache aller menschlichen Sprachbildung" (p. 143), and claims: "das ganze Gebäude der religiösen und profanen Sagen fast einzig und allein auf dem Kreislaufe des



Mondes. Der Mond war dem ursprünglichen Menschen das auffallendste Gestirn." (p. 1; Marr's italics).

- 80) And has as such invited numerous parodies; e.g. Bürger's Auch ein Lied an den lieben Mond (cf. below, p. 52, fn.7), Lenau's Hypochonders Mondlied, which ironically exhausts almost every traditional association of the moon in literature and folklore, and Jacob von Hoddiss's poem (cf. below, p.61, fn.23), as well as Goethe's parodies of the moonshine-poems of Empfindsamkeit (cf. below, p. 79ff.).
- 81) Hans Bender, "Lunarische Chronik; Zitate und Zeichen", Jahresring, 1959/60, p. 344.
- 82) A. Güttler and W. Petri, "Der Mond. Kulturgeschichte und Astronomie des Erdtrabanten", Forum Imaginum, 3 (1962), p. 5.
- 83) M. Nicolson, A World in the Moon, Northampton, Mass., 1935 (= Smith College Studies in Modern Languages XVII).
- 84) E. Landsberg, Das Nachtmotiv in den philosophischen Lehrgedichten von Haller bis Herder, Diss., Köln, 1934.
- 85) Brigitte Neske, Das Mondbuch. Der Mond in der deutschen Dichtung, Pfullingen, 1958.
- 86) Cf. the following:-  
 Gil Benumoya, "La Luna y la nueva Poesía", La Gaceta Literaria, Madrid, 15th June, 1931.  
 Alfred Better, "Der Mond in Dichtung und Volksglauben", Schweizer Monatshefte, 7 (1947).  
 Gustavo Correa, "El Simbolismo de la Luna en la Poesía de F.G. Lorca", PMLA, 72 (1957), pp. 1060-1084.  
 S.B. Liljegren, "Romantiken och Månen", Årsbok d. Vetenskaps-Societeten i Lund, 1923, pp. 37-58.  
 B. Pompecki, "Der Mond in der neueren deutschen Lyrik", Heimat und Welt, 24-28 (1911).  
 G. Rizzacasa d'Orsogna, La Luna nella Divina Commedia, Palermo, 1912.  
 L. Rodelgo, "La Luna y la Aurora en Poetas del Siglo XX", Revista Nacional de Educacion, Año IX, 92 (1949).  
 A. Zernitz, La Luna nella Credenzi Popolari e nella Poesia, Trieste, 1889.



- 87) Livingstone Lowes, op. cit., pp. 171-193.
- 88) A passage quoted by Lowes from Coleridge is of particular interest: "In looking at ... yonder moon dim-glimmering through the dewy window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking for, a symbolic language within me that already and forever exists, than observing anything new." Coleridge, Anima Poetae, ed. cit., p. 136.
- 89) P. Rühmkorf, "Abendliche Gedanken über das Schreiben von Mondgedichten. Eine Anleitung zum Widerspruch", in: Rühmkorf, Kunststücke, Rowohlt-Paperback, Hamburg, 1962, pp. 89-134.
- 90) Ibid., p. 103. Rühmkorf tends to see the development of moon-poetry in modern German literature very much as a sociological phenomenon: "... Eines sei hier nochmals dick zu unterstreichen gestattet, das nämlich bürgerliche Poesie in Deutschland sich mit silbernen Mondschein einführte, und daß das bürgerliche Zeitalter mit metaphorischem Mondwechsel verabschiedet wurde. Am Anfang der freudige Willkommensgruß Klopstocks: 'schöner stiller Gefährt der Nacht' -- am Ende die Verwünschung Heyms: 'der kalte Mond, der seine Gifte trüft', 'der dunklen Nacht Tyrann', 'ein ungeheurer Schädel, weiß und tot ...'." (p. 106).
- 91) "... Hier entfaltete artistische Raffinesse ihr gleisnerisches Spiel mit der Bewusstlosigkeit ... hier wollte überlichtetes Bewusstsein zurück zur Nacht. In Monde ... erkannten sie sich selbst, erkannten sie ihr eigenes Spiegelwesen, ihre Poesie des Uneigentlichen, ihren Reflexionscharakter und ihre Möglichkeitsform. Er war Beherrscher eines Zwischenreiches -- wie sie. Der mit geborgtem Lichte umging, als wär's das seine -- wie sie ...". Ibid., p. 99.  
Cf. also Georg Brandes, Hauptströmungen der Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts, Berlin, 1924, Vol.1, p. 282: "... Über all diesem liegt dann der unvermeidliche, blägelbe Schimmer von dem Freunde und Gönner, Beschützer und Verräter aller Liebenden, der höchste Zuflucht und Gottheit der Romantiker: dem Mann im Monde -- ihrem wahren Erlöser. Sein rundes Gesicht, sein rechtes und linkes Profil haben alle Deutlichkeit, die eine romantische Physiognomie überhaupt verträgt."



- 92) "... Hier war die Zufluchtsstätte plötzlich zum Hellenort geworden, hier zeigten sich die Wunsch- und Zwangsvorstellungen umgeschlagen und die Hoffnungen zu Ängstigungen verkehrt." For the Expressionist poets, says Rühmkorf, the moon once again became a serious motif, but in contrast to the Romantic image it had become "Zwangsbegleiter, Schreckensbote, Untergangssignal." (op. cit., pp. 105-6).
- 93) Ibid., pp. 91 and 108f; we might equally speculate, however, that the time is not far off where the poet will be in a position "zwischen sich und der Erde metaphorisch zu vermitteln".
- 94) K. Ihlenfeld, Zeitgesicht. Erlebnisse eines Lesers, Berlin, 1961. Ihlenfeld claims "daß die Eroberung des Mondes, längst ehe sie von der Technik versucht wurde, schon der Poesie gelang ... weil es bei uns tatsächlich so etwas wie eine poetische Eroberung des Mondes gegeben hat, über welche es jetzt an der Zeit wäre, germanistische Doktorarbeiten zu schreiben." (!) (p. 399).
- 95) W. Emrich, "Die Bilderwelt Franz Kafkas", in: Emrich, Protest und Verheißung, Bonn, 1960, pp. 249-263.
- 96) Kafka, Erzählungen, Berlin, 1935, pp. 13-14 ("Gespräch mit dem Beter").
- 97) Ibid., pp. 17-18 ("Gespräch mit dem Betrunkenen").
- 98) Emrich, Protest und Verheißung, p. 250.
- 99) Though it appears that Kafka is here not necessarily dealing with the problem of lyrical or poetic metaphor, but with the problem of definition and metaphorical expression in general.
- 100) Kafka, Erzählungen, p. 14.
- 101) Emrich, Protest und Verheißung, p. 250.
- 102) R. Petsch, "Goethes Mondlyrik", ZfA, 4 (1928), pp. 297-308.
- 103) Ibid., p. 300.



- 104) Hans Schulz, Anschauung und Darstellung des Mondes in Goethes Werken. Diss., Greifswald, 1912.
- 105) A claim which Franz Thorau (Anschauung und Darstellung der Sonne in Goethes Werken. Diss., Kiel, 1923) does his best to disprove; Thorau's zeal in pursuing his assertion that the sun-image is of far more importance in Goethe's works than that of the moon leads him to some curious critical conclusions, which are based almost entirely on an extraneous assessment of the image. For example, he sees Goethe as preferring the sun as an image because the moon is "das schwächere Gestirn" (pp. 56, 81, 141, 152 and passim), and does not take into account that this fact may itself be important in the formation and depth of Goethe's moon-images themselves -- cf. for example the moon-image from Tasso (below, p. 180ff.). Moreover, a moon-image need not necessarily be less important or vital than a sun-image simply because the moon is a less important or vital object than the sun; and since Goethe's moon-images often occur in close relationship with sun-images, it is unprofitable to pursue the argument as to which one is "preferred", either by the poet or the reader.
- 106) Erich, Symbolik von Faust II, p. 51 and passim.
- 107) Wellek and Warren, op. cit., p. 211. Clemen concludes his book on Shakespeare's imagery with a similar reminder (op. cit., p. 336).



Notes to Chapter Two

- 1) Cf. August Strack, Goethes Leipziger Liederbuch, Gießen, 1893, p. 52: "Seine Mondpoesie ist ... nicht ohne Vorbereitung in die Welt getreten." Both Strack and Arthur Kutscher (Das Naturgefühl in Goethes Lyrik bis 1789, Leipzig, 1906) are intent on tracing all possible literary antecedents for Goethe's early lyrics.
- 2) Charlotte Kahn, Die Melancholie in der deutschen Lyrik des 18. Jahrhunderts, Heidelberg, 1932, p. 80.
- 3) It is interesting, however, that Gottsched's wife preferred the light of the moon to that of the symbol of the Aufklärung, "weil es ihr viel reizender als das gar zu helle Sonnenlicht vorkam". Cf. Hans Schulz, op. cit., p. 7.
- 4) Young, Night Thoughts, Ninth Night, v. 2770f.
- 5) E. Landsberg, Das Nachtmotiv in den philosophischen Lehrschriften von Haller bis Herder, Diss., Köln, 1934, p. 15: "Die Beziehung der Abend- und Nachtgedanken zur Moral ist eine rationale. Es ist dieselbe Beziehung, an die auch Young anknüpft, wenn er seine Ermahnungen und Predigten in die Form der Night Thoughts kleidet." Cf. also Gottfried Diener, Die Nacht in der deutschen Dichtung von Herder bis zur Romantik, Diss., Würzburg, 1931, p. 21: "Für Young ist Nacht ... fast immer nur die am Tage folgende Zeit der Sammlung und Stille, die im Menschen durch den erhabenen Anblick des von Newton erst wahrhaft erschlossenen Kosmos die edelsten Kräfte weckt, in klarer Vernunftserkenntnis ihm die tiefsten Wahrheiten offenbart und den Willen zu tugendhaftem Leben in ihm stärkt."
- 6) Paul van Tieghem, "La Poésie de la Nuit et des Tombeaux" (= Vol. 2 of: Tieghem, Le Prérromantisme, Paris, 1924.)
- 7) P. Rühmkorf, op. cit., p. 94; Rühmkorf also points out that by the seventies of the century this sentimental moon-poetry was so common as to give rise to parody, e.g. that of G.A. Bürger, Auch ein Lied an den lieben Mond:



Auch bist du's wert, mein sanfter, holder, lieber ...  
 Ich weiß nicht recht, wie ich dich nennen soll?  
 Mann oder Weib? -- Schon lange war ich über  
 Und über deines warmen Lobes voll.

So wiesen's dann die Jungen und die Alten,  
 Was immerdar auch meine Wenigkeit  
 Vom schönen lieben Monde hat gehalten,  
 Und halten wird in Ewigkeit!

- 8) Cf. Opitz, Jetztund kommt die Nacht herbei:

Schöne glänzt der Mondenschein,  
 Und die güldnen Sternelein;  
 Froh ist alles weit und breit,  
 Ich nur bin in Traurigkeit.

- 9) Cf. Spee, Trauergesang von der Not Christi am Ölberg  
 in dem Garten:

Der schöne Mon will untergoxn,  
 Für Leid nit mehr mag scheinen;  
 Die Sterne lan ihr Glitzen stahn,  
 Mit mir sie wollen weinen.

- 10) Cf. Brookes, Betrachtung des Mondscheins in einer  
 angenehmen Frühlings-Nacht:

Im nah geleg'nen Thal,  
 Woran ein Wasser grentzte,  
 Das, durch des Mondes weißen Strahl,  
 Recht wie ein fließend Silber gläntzte,  
 In einem dichten Busch, woran der Blätter Grün  
 Nicht grün, nicht grau, nicht falb, auf einmal  
 alles schien ...

More often than he wrote moon-poetry based on  
 nature-perception, however, Brookes used the moon  
 for didactic or religious purposes:

Ach laßt uns an die Sonne denken, wenn wir  
 den sanften Mond-Schein sehn,  
 die ihn bestrahlt, und in der Sonne, der Sonnen  
 Sonne, Gott, erhöh'n! (Ibid.)

(cf. fig. 1.)



- 11) Charlotte Kahn (op. cit., p. 81) mentions Zachariä, Neubeck, Huber and later Matthiesson as those poets who use the moon above all as a "melancholisches Stilmittel".
- 12) Cf. S.S. Praver, German Lyric Poetry, London, 1952, pp. 52-3: "The German lyric had become, largely thanks to Klopstock, far more efficient a medium for the communication of individual human experience than it had ever been, and its writers seemed to be groping towards that fusion of the personal and general, of man's mind and the nature it perceived, which was to be finally achieved by Goethe."
- 13) "Die Geschichte des Naturgefühls etwa von Brookes angefangen bis zu Goethe ist die Geschichte eines glückhaften Wagens, das durch immer neue und schönere Verheißungen die zögernden Versuche hervorlockt und befeuert, aus den festgefühten Bezirken der Vernunft in die freien Gefilde des Gefühls hinauszutreten": Martin Greiner, "Das frühromantische Naturgefühl bei Tieck und Novalis", in: Von deutscher Poesie, 7 (1930), p.1; Praver also points out that Klopstock's moon-poetry in particular can be seen as the direct forerunner of Goethe's: "From ... Klopstock's Die frühen Gräber a direct line leads to Goethe's Jägers Abendlied and An den Mond." (op. cit., p. 44). Apart from Die frühen Gräber, Klopstock's outstanding moon-lyric is Die Sommernacht, which has a similar association of melancholy and graves with the moon-motif, which Goethe draws on for one of the moonlight scenes in Werther (cf. below, p. 74):

Wenn der Schimmer von dem Monde nun herab  
In die Wälder sich ergießt, und Gerüche  
Mit den Düften von der Linde  
In den Kühlen wehn;

So umschatten mich Gedanken an das Grab  
Der Geliebten, und ich seh in dem Walde  
Nur es dämmern, und es weht mir  
Von der Blüte nicht her.

Ich genoß einst, o ihr Toten, es mit euch!  
Wie umwehten uns der Duft und die Kühlung,  
Wie verschönt warst von dem Monde  
Du o schöne Natur!



cf. also Klopstock's Hymnus an den Mond (1772).

- 14) Claudius's moon-lyrics present an interesting mixture of moralising didacticism and fine imagery -- e.g. in the two poems, Abendlied:

Seht ihr den Mond dort stehen?  
Er ist nur halb zu sehen,  
Und ist doch rund und schön!  
So sind wohl manche Sachen,  
Die wir getrost belachen,  
Weil unsre Augen sie nicht sehen;

-- and Wiegenlied, bei Mondschein zu singen:

Alt ist er wie ein Rabe,  
Sieht manches Land,  
Mein Vater hat als Knabe  
Ihn schon gekannt.

- 15) Indeed, the moon, not surprisingly, played a considerable rôle in presiding over the weird ceremony of consecration of the Hainbund on 12th September, 1772, as Voß describes it to Brückner:

"Der Abend war außerordentlich heiter, und der Mond voll. Wir überließen uns ganz den Empfindungen der schönen Natur. Wir aßen in einer Bauernhütte eine Milch, und begaben uns darauf ins freie Feld. Hier fanden wir einen kleinen Eichengrund, und sogleich fiel uns allen ein, den Bund der Freundschaft unter diesen heiligen Bäumen zu schwören. Wir umkränzten die Hütte mit Eichenlaub, legten sie unter den Baum, fasten uns alle bei den Händen, tanzten so um den eingeschlossenen Stamm herum, riefen den Mond und die Sterne zu Zeugen unseres Bundes an, und versprachen uns eine ewige Freundschaft" (Briefe von J.H. Voß, ed. A. Voß, Halberstadt, 1829, Vol.1, p. 91; letter of 20th September to Brückner).

- 16) Cf. van Tieghem, Le Sentiment de la Nature dans le Prérromantisme Européen, Paris, 1960, pp. 125-6:  
"Entre toutes les beautés du ciel nocturne, c'est la lune qui règne sans conteste ... riche matière à poésie et à prose poétique que les romantiques exploiteront abondamment, mais dont le 18ème siècle avait déjà beaucoup tiré."



- 17) Cf. van Tieghem, Ossian et l'Ossianisme dans la Littérature Européenne au 18ème Siècle, Den Haag, 1920, pp. 1 and 56: "L'importance de l'Ossianisme ... s'explique par le caractère composite et artificielle de l'Ossian de Macpherson et de Smith: s'il est ancien par quelques traits, il a été repensé et complètement refait par les modernes; s'il offre quelques-uns des caractères d'une révélation, il est en harmonie avec les idées et les sentiments du temps, il se prête admirablement à leur servir d'expression" ... "La poésie sidérale a été l'une des grandes nouveautés d'Ossian ... quant à la lune, il paraît avoir été son véritable introducteur dans la poésie moderne, où elle devait jouer un si grand rôle".
- 18) van Tieghem, Sentiment de la Nature, p. 121.
- 19) Strack (op. cit., p. 62) claims that this is "wenigstens ein Zug, der auf eigener Beobachtung ruhen muß"; both Strack and Kutscher, intent on tracing all possible parallels and antecedents for Goethe's images, do in fact manage to find them for the most part. Not only the "Nacht der Eichen", and the image of Zephyrs as heralds are seen as derived images, but also that of pollen as incense has its sources in Thomson and Ossian (cf. Kutscher, op. cit., p. 24). This does not, however, prevent Strack from seeing the latter as a fresh and original image, his main reason for this view being that the poem was written in April 1768, at the time, then, of birch-blossom. This correlation of the image with the precise date of composition is a rather dubious criterion for the "naturalness", or otherwise, of an image; are we to assume, if we regard the previous two lines as "unnatural" or "unoriginal", that the moon did not shine through the oaks, or that there were no west winds, in April 1768?
- 20) E. g. "Busch und Tal", "Freud und Schmerz", "Scherz und Kuß", "ohne Rast und Ruh" (An den Mond); "Freud und Schmerzen", "Qual und Lust" (Wanderers Nachtlied I), etc.
- 21) James Boyd, Notes to Goethe's poems, Oxford, 1944, Vol.1, p. 6.



- 22) E.g. the two Wanderers Nachtlieder of 1776 and 1780; the two poems entitled Ultimatum; the two Mallieder of 1771 and 1810; the three entitled An Lili; the many An Frau von Stein, etc.
- 23) The gender of the moon in German lyrics is discussed by Hans Bender (op. cit., p. 345), who points out that the feminine moon is relatively rare in German literature, its grammatical gender embarrassing or exasperating some poets -- cf. Bürger's parody above, fn. 7, and Jacob von Hoddiss:

Der Mond ist meine Tante,  
Er schmoddert durch die Nacht.

(from Weltende und andere Dichtungen, Zürich, 1958).

- 24) Cf. WA.I.10.56:

Geschwister, die ihr an dem weiten Himmel  
Das schöne Licht bei Tag und Nacht herauf  
Den Menschen bringet, und den Abgeschiednen  
Nicht leuchten dürftet, rettet uns Geschwister!

- 25) Strack (op. cit., p. 50) and Kutscher (op. cit., p. 27) quote three possible literary sources:

Cardinal de Bernis: "La soeur aimable du soleil".  
Chaulieu: "Du dieu de la lumière l'inégale soeur".  
Young: "I to Day's soft-eyed Sister pay my Court".

- 26) Eugen Wolff, Der junge Goethe, Oldenburg and Leipzig, 1907, p. 371. Cf. Ossian, Temora, Book 2: "The moon looked in, at night, and saw the white tossing of her arms; for she thought of the mighty Crothar, in the season of dreams." (The Poems of Ossian, translated by James Macpherson, Edinburgh, 1814, Vol.2, p. 52).

- 27) Cf. Gerstenberg's Das schlafende Mädchen, Zachariä's poem of the same title, and Ebeling's Nachtsgedanken in einem Kloster:

Jetzt, da der Mond die rasselnden Gespenster  
Zum nächtlichen Spaziergang weckt,  
Und schalkheitsvoll durchs falsche Kammerfenster  
Geheime Reizungen entdeckt ...

A similar theme is found in a Greek folksong translated by Goethe very much later:



Luna, solcher hohen Stelle  
 Weiten Umblick neid ich dir,  
 Sei auch der Entfernten helle,  
 Aber äugle nicht mit ihr.

(WA.I.3.224).

- 28) The image of the opening lines of the poem is a fine evocation of the dim, misty moon, and bears comparison with the lines from Coleridge's ode Dejection (1802):

For lo! the New Moon, winter-bright!  
 And overspread with phantom light,  
 (With swimming phantom light o'erspread,  
 But rimmed and circled with a silver thread).

- 29) WA.I.53.154. The original runs: "Wide, over Lara's stream, is poured the vapour dark and deep: the moon like a dim shield is swimming thro' its folds."

- 30) It is true that earlier poets in the 18th century had already described moonlight in terms of "Dämmerung", e.g. Wieland: "... beim dämmernden Schein des Mondes" (Agathon V. 9); "... im dämmernden Mondschein" (Don Sylvio II. 6) -- and Goethe himself had already used the phrase in the second Ode an Behrlich:

Fliehe sanfte Nachtgänge  
 In der Mondendämmerung,  
 Dort halten zuckende Kröten  
 Zusammenkunft auf Kreuzwegen ...

(WA.I.4.184).

-- but it is not until An Luna, and the influence of Ossian, that he exploits Oeser's theories fully in his poetry.

- 31) "Was bin ich Ihnen nicht schuldig, teuerster Herr Professor, daß Sie mir den Weg zum Wahren und Schönen gezeigt haben, daß Sie mein Herz gegen den Reiz fühlbar gemacht haben", (WA.IV.1.178).
- 32) Cf. WA.I.19.175 and I.37.76: "Oft im sinkenden Monde sehe ich die Geister meiner Kinder, halb dämmernd wandeln sie zusammen in trauriger Eintracht..."
- 33) Cf. below, pp.94, 155ff., 278 and 313. There is,



of course, no evidence here that the association of moonlight, dead souls, spirits, etc., is due to the direct influence of either Klopstock or Ossian; it is only the striking similarity of phrases, motifs and associations that lead us to this conclusion. The same association is common enough in the folklore and superstition of most European countries (cf. Wolf, Der Mond in deutschen Volksglauben).

- 34) Kutscher, op. cit., p. 28.
- 35) Massey (Luniolatry, p. 2f. and passim) shows how in ancient religions, for example Egyptian, the moon was seen as the eye of the sun; the familiar legend of the Man in the Moon has the same element: the moon, as the all-seeing eye, detects a crime committed at night, usually someone stealing wood (or, in the later Christian version of the tale, collecting wood on the Sabbath), -- whence the idea of the Man in the Moon with a bundle of sticks on his back -- as a result of which the offender is drawn up to the moon and becomes the "Man in the Moon". Cf. also W.H. Roscher, Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, Leipzig, 1894-97, Vol.2,11, pp. 3138-9; cf. below, p. 173, and the Greek folksong quoted above, fn. 27.
- 36) Herder, Sämtliche Werke, ed. Suphan, Berlin, 1877, Vol.1, pp. 443-4.
- 37) E. Staiger, Goethe, Zürich, 1959, Vol.1, p. 67.
- 38) Cf. Poems of Ossian, ed. cit. : "Rise, moon, from behind thy clouds!" (Vol.1, p. 173); "The moon, from the east, looked on the mournful field ..." (Vol.1, p. 89); "... like the glimmering light of the moon, when it shines through broken clouds" (Vol.1, p. 9); "The moon looks abroad from her cloud ..." (Vol.2, p. 75); cf. also one of the passages included in Werther: "Walk through broken clouds, O moon! Show thy pale face, at intervals! Bring to my mind the night when all my children fell; when Arindal the mighty fell; when Daura the lovely fell." (Vol.1, p. 178).
- 39) Cf. below, pp. 95ff., 112ff., 133ff., 173, 196f., 281ff., 328ff. and passim.



- 40) Cf. Klopstock's Die Sommernacht (above, p. 45). Passages from Goethe's own letters to J.C. Kestner have a similar mood to these passages from the novel:
- "... Inzwischen war ich da, hab Ihnen zu sagen, daß Lotte heut Nacht sich am mondbeschiedenen Thal innig ergötzt, und Ihnen eine gute Nacht sagen wird" (WA.IV.2.20).
- "... Der arme Junge! [Jerusalem] wenn ich zurückkam vom Spaziergang und er mir begegnete hinaus im Mondschein, sagt ich er ist verliebt. Lotte muß sich noch erinnern, daß ich drüber lächelte ..." (WA.IV.2.34).
- "... Diese Nacht träumte ich von Lotten, und wie ich aufwachte saß ich so im Bett und dachte an all unser Wesen, von dem ersten Lager in Garbenheim bis zum Mondenmitternachtsgespräch an der Mauer, und weiter. Es war ein schönes Leben, auf das ich ganz heiter zurücksehe ..." (WA.IV.2.52).
- 41) Cf. WA.I.19.157: "Ich fürchte, ich fürchte, es ist nur die Unmöglichkeit, mich zu besitzen, die Ihnen diesen Wunsch so reizend macht"; and there is a close parallel to the concluding passage of book one in the letter of 21st June, 1771:
- "Oh es ist mit der Ferne wie mit der Zukunft! Ein großes dämmerndes Ganzes ruht vor unserer Seele, unsere Empfindung verschwimmt darin wie unser Auge, und wir sehnen uns, ach! unser ganzes Wesen hinzugeben, uns mit aller Wonne eines einzigen, großen, herrlichen Gefühls ausfüllen zu lassen. - Und ach! wenn wir hinzueilen, wenn das Dort nun Hier wird, ist alles vor wie nach, und wir stehen in unserer Armut, in unserer Eingeschränktheit, und unsere Seele lechzt nach entschlüpftem Labsale" (WA.I.19.39).
- 42) Cf. below, pp. 232ff.
- 43) Ingrid Dzialis ("Auffassung und Darstellung der Elemente bei Goethe", Germanische Studien, 216, 1939, p. 132) points out the relationship of sun and moon imagery in Werther: "Am 18. August taucht zum ersten Male ein Bild der untergehenden Sonne auf, und bald danach werden Nächte und Vollmond geschildert ... in dem Augenblick also, wo man das tragische Ende ahnt und weiß, verschwindet das helle Sonnenlicht, das jeden Menschen freudig und hoffnungsvoll stimmt, an dessen Stelle tritt das



schwerwütige Licht der untergehenden Sonne und das übersinnliche und sehnsüchtige Licht des Mondes."

More recently, Gerhard Neumann has examined the relationship between sun and moon images in Werther, and its bearing on the similar pattern of imagery in Tasso (cf. below, p. 177f). Neumann sees the sun-imagery in Werther as related to the "Homeric" element in the novel, whereas the moon-imagery is related to the "Ossianic" element: "Zwei Dichter erscheinen als Repräsentanten zweier Welten: Homer und Ossian. Ihnen zugeordnet erweisen sich die Gestirne: die Sonne Homers, die Mondwelt Ossians ... Die ersten Briefe stehen im Zeichen des Sonnenaufgangs; Werther kann sich nicht genug tun, ihn immer wieder darzustellen. Dann fällt der Name Ossian; das Licht der Sonne neigt sich der 'Nachtseite' zu im Phänomen des Bononischen Steins, es ist die Zeit der Sonnenuntergänge. Mondseligkeit wird Thema der Briefe (10.9.1771). Ein Hessesentiment gegen das Motiv 'Sonne' macht sich breit (20.1.1771; 8.2.1772). Am 12.10.1772 ist die Wende der Sonne zum Mond, von Homer zu Ossian vollzogen ..." (Neumann, Konfiguration. Studien zu Goethes 'Torquato Tasso', München, 1965, p. 194f.)

- 44) Cf. above, p. 65 ("Ossian hat in meinem Herzen ...")
- 45) Cf. Gerhard Fimmel, Corpus der Goethezeichnungen, Leipzig, 1958- , Vol.1, Abb.38, 153, 158, etc., and Hans Wahl, Goethe als Zeichner der deutschen Landschaft, Erfurt, 1951, Abb.14. Cf. figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5.
- 46) Cf. also the Werther passage taken directly from Ossian:  
 "Tritt, o Mond, aus deinen Wolken! erscheinet, Sterne der Nacht! Leite mich irgend ein Strahl zu dem Orte, wo meine Liebe ruht ... Aber hier muß ich sitzen allein auf dem Felsen des verwachsenen Stroms. Der Strom und der Sturm saust, ich höre nicht die Stimme meines Geliebten ..." (WA.I.19.167 and I.37.67).  
 -- A passage different in mood, but with the same association of the moon and water, is found in another of Goethe's letters to Kestner:  
 "... Dann ging ich mit Antoinetten und Nannen auf die Brücke einen Nachspaziergang. Das Wasser ist sehr groß rauschte stark und die Schiffe alle versammelt ineinander, und der liebe trübe Mond ward freundlich begrüßt, und Antoinetten fand das alles



paradiesisch schön ..." (WA.IV.2.60).

47) Cf. below, p. 98ff.

48) Cf. the Werther passage from Ossian's Alpin:  
 "Allein auf dem seebespülten Felsen hörte ich die Klagen meiner Tochter. Viel und laut war ihr Schreien, doch konnte sie ihr Vater nicht retten. Die ganze Nacht stand ich am Ufer, ich sah sie im schwachen Strahle des Mondes, die ganze Nacht hörte ich ihr Schreien ..." (WA.I.19.174 and I.37.75).  
 -- This passage bears a striking resemblance in content, though not in form, to the picture of Sperata hopelessly seeking her child by the shore in moonlight in the Wanderjahre -- cf. below, p. 231f.

49) van Tieghem, Ossian et l'Ossianisme, p. 57.

50) Cf. WA.I.15.1.31 (v. 5296f.): Die Nacht- und Gräbdichter lassen sich entschuldigen, weil sie soeben im interessantesten Gespräch mit einem frisch erstandenen Vampyre begriffen seien, woraus eine neue Dichtart sich vielleicht entwickeln könnte...

51) Cf. also Stella's monologue in Act V (stage direction: Stellas Kabinett. Im Mondenschein):  
 "Wohin? Ach, wohin? -- Verbannt aus dieser Schöpfung! Wo du, heiliger Mond, auf den Wipfeln meiner Bäume dämmerst, wo du mit furchtbar lieben Schatten das Grab meiner holden Minna umgibst, soll ich nicht mehr wandeln? Von dem Ort, wo alle Schätze meines Lebens, alle selige Erinnerungen aufbewahrt sind? ... etc., etc., (WA.I.11.182).

52) Cf. also WA.I.11.238:

Gesang und Saitenspiel, die großen Freunde  
 Des Menschenlebens, schützen meinen Weg  
 Durch die Gefilde, die der Mond beleuchtet,

and WA.I.11.243:

Der hohe Mond schien tröstend zu verweilen;  
 Da sah mich Amor und erbarmte sich.

53) Cf. G. Brandes, op. cit., Vol.1, p. 279: "Das



Dunkel der Nacht und der Bergschluichten, die Einsamkeit, in welcher panischer Schreck das Gemüt grausig erfasst, ist dem Romantiker lieb, und der Tiecksche Vollmond strahlt so unveränderlich darüber, als wäre es ein Theatermond von geöltem Papier mit einer Laterne dahinter."

- 54) Cf. WA.I.16.136:

Was alles zarte schöne Seelen rührt,  
Ward treu von ihm nachahmend ausgeführt:  
Des Rasens Grün, des Wassers Silberfall,  
Der Vögel Sang, des Donners lauter Knall,  
Der Laube Schatten und des Mondes Licht --  
Ja selbst ein Ungeheur erschreckt ihn nicht.

- 55) Cf. Hans Schulz, Anschauung und Darstellung des Mondes, p. 67, and J. Minor and A. Sauer, Studien zur Goethe-Philologie, Wien, 1880, p. 56.

- 56) Cf. Richard Friedenthal, Goethe, his Life and Times, London, 1963: "The reason he writes Der Groß-Cophta at all is that he has taken over the directorship of the Weimar Court Theatre. He proceeds very cautiously in compiling his repertory because he knows that he cannot expect too much from his public. Singspiele, operettas, the usual theatrical wares, form the mainstay, and continue to do so for a long time to come ..." (p. 300) ... "When he took over the directorship he thought that he would be able to contribute two or three lighter plays himself each year; his attempts are among his weakest works." (p. 365). A distinction might be made here, however, between the whimsical, ironical or satirical Singspiele, and the allegorical Maskenzüge; whereas the former only exhaust the tradition of the Mondnacht à la mode of Empfindsamkeit, the latter often contain within their allegories the beginnings of some of Goethe's later symbolism (cf. below, p.187, fn.20).

- 57) Eekermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 2, p. 43. (10th February, 1829).

- 58) Cf. WA.I.19.8: "Wenn ich das Wimmeln der kleinen Welt zwischen Halmen, die unzählig unergründlichen Gestalten der Würmchen, der Mückchen näher an meinem Herzen fühle und fühle die Gegenwart des Allmächtigen, der uns nach seinem Bilde schuf, das



Wehen des Allliebenden, der uns in ewiger Wonne schwebend trägt und erhält ..." and WA.I.19.74: "Wenn ... mir das innere, glühende, heilige Leben der Natur eröffnete: wie faste ich das alles in mein warmes Herz, fühlte mich in der überfließenden Fülle wie vergöttert, und die herrlichen Gestalten der unendlichen Welt bewegten sich allbelebend in meiner Seele..."

- 59) Cf. also the following fragmentary dialogue between Mahomet and Halima:

Mahomet: Ich war nicht allein. Der Herr, mein Gott, hat sich freundlichst zu mir genahet.

Halima: Sahst du ihn?

Mahomet: Siehst du ihn nicht? An jeder stillen Quelle, unter jedem blühenden Baum begegnet er mir in der Wärme seiner Liebe. (WA.I.39.190).

Staiger gives an illuminating commentary on the conception of nature in the Mahomet fragment: "Es handelt sich ... nicht darum, das Irdische gegen das Ewige einzutauschen, sondern das Eine, immer Gleiche, in dem Vielen, das wechselt, zu finden ... es ist immer das Eine Göttliche, das im Gestirn sowohl wie in der Quelle, im Mond wie im Baum die Seele ergreift." (Goethe, Vol.1, p. 103). Cf. also Goethe's own commentary to the fragment, which he had presumed lost, in Dichtung und Wahrheit:

"Das Stück fing mit einer Hymne an, welche Mahomet allein unter dem heitern Nachthimmel anstimmt. Erst verehrt er die unendlichen Gestirne als eben so viele Götter; dann steigt der freundliche Stern Gad (unser Jupiter) hervor, und nun wird diesem, als dem König der Gestirne, ausschließliche Verehrung gewidmet. Nicht lange, so bewegt sich der Mond herauf und gewinnt Aug und Herz des Anbetenden, der sodann, durch die hervortretende Sonne herrlich erquickt und gestärkt, zu neuem Preise aufgerufen wird. Aber dieser Wechsel, so erfreulich er auch sein mag, ist dennoch beunruhigend, das Gemüt empfindet, das es sich nochmals überbieten muß; es erhebt sich zu Gott, dem Einzigen, Ewigen, Unbegrenzten, dem alle diese begrenzten herrlichen Wesen ihr Dasein zu verdanken haben." (WA.I.28.295).

- 60) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 107: "Goethe ...



lebt und dichtet noch 'absichtslos' und weigert sich, irgend eine abstrakte Ordnung, ein Gesetz -- des Daseins oder des Verses -- anzuerkennen, das er nicht willkürlich, aus augenblicklichem Drang zu erfüllen vermöchte. Deshalb taucht die Gestalt des Stifters Mahomet nur neben anderen Gestalten auf, und bleibt es bei der einen, nicht einmal allzu glücklichen, eher etwas gewaltsamen Anstrengung, Verse nach dem Muster der antiken Ode zu schreiben."

- 61) The stars had already had similar symbolic association in Werther; cf. WA.I.19.187:

"... Ich trete an das Fenster, meine Beste! und sehe und sehe noch durch die stürmenden, vorüberfliehenden Wolken einzelne Sterne des ewigen Himmels! Nein, ihr werdet nicht fallen! der Ewige trägt euch an seinem Herzen, und mich ..."

And this symbolic association of the stars and, to some extent also the moon, as heavenly bodies representing permanent, unchanging, God-given and unattainable objects of veneration and longing while at the same time holding reassurance and promise of an established divine order, is to accompany Goethe throughout his life: it recurs in An den Mond and in the reports of the Schweizer Reise, in An Lida, Gewiß, ich wäre schon so ferne, ferne and in Um Mitternacht very much later (cf. below, p. 269ff); in the West-östliche Divan in an Oriental context, as in the Mahomet ode; in conjunction with moon-symbolism in the Notturmo of the elves' chorus in the opening scene of Faust II (cf. below, p. 283); and above all in Pandora:

Einig, unverrückt, zusammenwandernd,  
Leuchten ewig sie herab, die Sterne;  
Mondlicht überglänzet alle Höhen,  
Und im Laube rauschet Windesfächeln,  
Und im Fächeln atmet Philomele,  
Atmet froh mit ihr der junge Busen,  
Aufgeweckt vom holden Frühlingstraume.  
Ach! warum, ihr Götter, ist unendlich  
Alles, alles, endlich unser Glück nur!

Sternenglanz und Mondes Überschimmer,  
Schattentiefe, Wassersturz und Rauschen  
Sind unendlich, endlich unser Glück nur.  
(vv. 491-502).



This star-symbolism, which clearly shares some, but not all, of the associations of moon-symbolism in Goethe's work, reaches its fullest expression in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, where Nereus sees Galatea's "Muschelwagen" through the throng like a star, unattainable but reassuring:

Aber Galateas Muschelthron  
 Seh' ich schon und aber schon.  
 Er glänzt wie ein Stern  
 Durch die Menge.  
 Geliebtes leuchtet durchs Gedränge!  
 Auch noch so fern  
 Schimmert's hell und klar,  
 Immer nah und wahr.

(vv. 8450-57).

Gottfried Diener sums up this ultimate expression of Goethe's star-symbolism, which takes its beginnings in his earliest works: "Der Stern ist also ein Sinnbild trostvoller Entsagung durch Erheben des unerreichbar gewordenen Schönen, Lieben, Bedeutenden zu himmlischer Verklärung, mit deren Abglanz man die Seele dauernd zu erfüllen vermag ... Die Himmelskörper, 'herrlich wie am ersten Tag', die unverrückt und ewig herableuchtenden Sterne, deren Glanz 'unendlich' ist wie alle großen Naturphänomene, verbürgen gleichsam durch ihren Segen die Unzerstörbarkeit hoher Gefühle, durch welche die Seele für immer 'hoch und hehr aus irdischem Gewühle' in die Sphäre des Ewigen emporgehoben wird." (Diener, Fausts Weg zu Helena, Stuttgart, 1961, p. 569).

Moreover, the stars, like the moon, are frequently expressed by Goethe as reflected in water -- the reflection of the divine or the eternal in the soul of man -- a theme which similarly runs through the whole of his oeuvre.

- 62) Goethe's Urfaust and Faust, ein Fragment, ed. L.A. Willoughby, Oxford, 1951, p. 4.
- 63) Geneviève Bianquis, "Faust, poème de la lumière", Etudes Germaniques, 2-3, (1949), p. 142. Mlle. Bianquis explains the dominance of light-symbolism in Faust as follows: "S'il est vrai ... que toute grande imagination poétique soit liée de prédilection à un élément favori, à un système de symboles naturels révélateurs d'affinités profondes et



complexes, il faudra dire de Goethe qu'il est avant tout le poète de la lumière ..." (p. 139).

- 64) Cf. below, pp. 112 and 133.
- 65) The association of the moon with rebirth, regeneration and immortality is one common to a number of cultures and beliefs; cf. R. Briffault, The Mothers, Vol.2, p. 652: "... In a more general way the moon is conceived as dying every month and as being born again after three days, and the power of man to survive every month, or the hope that they will survive after death, is regarded as being derived from the moon, and as dependent on the moon's faculty of being born again after dying each month. Thus the eternal moon is not only the cause of death, but also the source of the power of renewed life and resurrection." Cf. also Carl Hentze, Mythes et Symboles Lunaires, p. 57ff.
- 66) Cf. below, p. 282f.
- 67) Cf. Wolf, Der Mond im deutschen Volksglauben, and Briffault, op. cit., Vol.2, p. 632ff. Wolf deals exhaustively with the moon in folklore and popular belief -- so exhaustively, in fact, that inevitably many powers and effects attributed to the moon contradict each other altogether. The distinct impression remains, however, that certain associations are common to all, or most, cultures and folklores; among them, the idea that water, and particularly the moon reflected in water, has an uncanny power of attraction, the idea that spirits dance by moonlight, the belief that the moon has a particular influence on plants and animals (either harmful or beneficial), etc. These are ideas that have been used, consciously or unconsciously, by poets. Now, there is no evidence that Goethe consciously drew on these beliefs for his imagery -- even taking into account the strong folkloric elements in the poetry of this period and earlier under the influence of Herder; we can only suggest that the associations of the moon for Goethe -- water, spirits, dew, etc. -- are taken, perhaps unconsciously, from the common knowledge of popular belief, and are used as lyrical motifs in an original and personal way, except, of course, where he is consciously and deliberately parodying such beliefs -- cf. Mephisto's sarcasm in Faust II:



Nehmt Froschlaich, Krötenzungen, cohoziert,  
Im vollsten Mondlicht sorglich destilliert...  
(WA.I.15,1.76; vv. 6325-6).

- 68) Cf. below, pp. 120ff., 137f., 143ff., 153f., 157f., 202ff., 215f., 231, 237f., 283ff., 288, 321, 325ff.
- 69) Cf. above, p. 76f. There is, moreover, an ironical and sarcastic reference to this effect of the moon in the Auerbachs Keller scene of the Urfaust -- a reference which may be associated with the parodies of Empfindsamkeit dealt with above: "... Ich hasse das Geklumpere ... für kleine Mägden ist's so was die nit schlafen können, und am Fenster stehen Monden Kühlung einzusuckeln". (Urfaust, ed. cit., p. 66).
- 70) J. Schwabe, "Lebenswasser und Pfau, zwei Symbole der Wiedergeburt", Symbolon 1, Basel, 1960, pp. 138-172. In this connexion, Schwabe mentions the identification of Soma, the Indian drink of the gods, with the moon: the moon was believed to be a pitcher containing the liquid, from which the gods drank every month. He also quotes a superstition among the bushmen which is interesting in relation to the Urfaust passage:
- "Wenn das von uns angeschossene Wild nicht stirbt, so ist es die Wirkung des Mondwassers, das es leben läßt. Denn unsere Mütter pflegten uns zu sagen, daß das Mondwasser, das wir auf dem Busch dort sehen, flüssigem Honig gleicht. Es fällt auf das Wild, das Wild steht auf, wenn es darauf gefallen ist. Es kühlt das Gift, womit wir das Wild schossen ... das Mondwasser ist's, das heilt." (Schwabe's italics) -- We must assume that by "Mondwasser" is meant the dew on the bushes which reflects the moonlight.
- This association in the Urfaust passage has not, of course, escaped the notice of critics -- of. W. Müller, Die Erscheinungsform des Wassers, p. 53: "War vor ihm der Tau besonders wegen der Helligkeit des Tautropfens und seines Farbenglanzes im Sonnenschein von den Dichtern verwendet, so weiß Goethe ihm eine andere Seite abzugewinnen. Für ihn hatte der Tau etwas Befeuchtendes, die unberührte Reinheit des Taus verleiht neue Kräfte ... im Eingangsmonolog des Faust schreibt der Dichter dem Tau und zwar dem in der Mondnacht gefallenem, die Kraft zu, dem Menschen geistige und körperliche Gesundheit zu verschaffen."



- 71) Cf. below, p. 282ff; the notion of bathing as an element of rebirth and regeneration recurs particularly in the early Weimar years, in the lines written to Frau von Stein in 1777 quoted below, in the letters describing swimming by moonlight (cf. below, p. 121, fn. 26), and more specifically in a letter to Charlotte of 2nd July, 1781: "Wie gut ist's, daß der Mensch sterbe um nur die Eindrücke auszulöschen und gebadet wiederzukommen" (WA.IV.5.161). Cf. also Eugen Wolf, "Heilende Kräfte in Goethes Dichtung", Goethe, 28 (1966), p. 170.
- 72) Urfaust, ed. cit., p. 10.
- 73) H. Jantz, Faust as a Renaissance Man, Princeton U.P., 1951, pp. 173-4. Cf. Cicero, De Divinatione:  
 cum claram speciem concreto lumine luna  
 abdidit et subito stellanti nocte perempta est ...  
 aut cum se gravido tremefecit corpore tellus.
- 74) Das Puppenspiel vom Doktor Johannes Faust, ed. C. Höfer, Leipzig, 1914, p. 21.
- 75) Franz Thorau's conclusion (Anschauung und Darstellung der Sonne, p. 56) that the moon in this poem, "die schwächere Kraft, ... nur als atmosphärisch gegebener Kontrast zur Sonne aufgeführt wird", ignores not only the context of the poem, but also fails to take into account the associative power of the image of the moon with coolness; such a statement can only be explained by Thorau's zeal to prove the sun mightier than the moon in Goethe's works at all costs.
- 76) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, pp. 263-4.



Notes to Chapter Three

- 1) This connexion has been taken up by many critics; Körner points out with reference to Jägers Abendlied, An den Mond and Einschränkung: "Einschränkung in eine engere Welt, Beruhigung jäher Sehnsucht, Stillung gehetzter Unrast sprechen die drei Stücke gleicherweise aus" (J. Körner, "Goethes Mondlied", SdpJ. 25, 1936, p. 13). Some of the conclusions drawn from this similarity of theme are curious -- for instance, Berthold Litzmann (Goethes Lyrik, Berlin, 1903, p. 114) claims that Jägers Abendlied is the male voice in a dialogue, the reply being given by a woman in the later poem An den Mond.
- 2) J.C. de Buisongé, Charlotte von Stein und Christiane Vulpius in Goethes Lyrik, Diss., Utrecht, 1923, p. 23f. Cf. H.G. Gräf, Goethe über seine Dichtungen, Frankfurt, 1901-14, Part 3, Vol. 2, 11, p. 1100, and E. von der Hellen, JA. 1.323: "Obwohl es gewiß noch Lili ist, deren Bild dem Dichter vorschwebt, ... darf man das Lied nicht in die Frankfurter Zeit zurückdatieren, denn erst in Weimar ergab sich Goethe dem Waldwerk."
- 3) Buisongé, op. cit., p. 25.
- 4) Schulz, Anschauung und Darstellung des Mondes, p. 47.
- 5) "Sie [Charlotte] ist sehr fromm, und zwar mit einem rührend schwärmerischen Schwung der Seele. Aus ihrem leichten Zephyrgang und aus ihrer theatralischen Fertigkeit in künstlichen Tänzen würdest du nicht schließen, was doch sehr wahr ist, daß stilles Mondlicht und Mitternacht ihr Herz mit Gottesruhe füllt" (J. Petersen, Aus der Goethezeit, Leipzig, 1932, p. 26).
- 6) The point is made more clearly in the letter written to Karl-August in which the poem appears: "... Wie ich so in der Nacht gegen das Fichtengebürg ritt; kam das Gefühl der Vergangenheit, meines Schicksaals und meiner Liebe über mich, und sang so bey mir selber: Holde Lili ..." (WA. IV. 3.8).
- 7) Cf. A. Kutscher, Das Naturgefühl in Goethes Lyrik, pp. 116-7: "Es ist gewiß nicht anzunehmen, daß



dies Gedicht lediglich an Lili gedacht ist, vor allem ist die Ruhe und der 'süße' Friede am Schluss dadurch nicht genug begründet". Kutscher goes on to point out that some three or four weeks later the Wanderers Nachtlied I, definitely addressed to Charlotte, was written, but makes the obvious enough reservation: "Es wäre nun aber verkehrt, wollte man, wie dies gewöhnlich geschieht, Goethes Wandlung allein der Frau von Stein zuschreiben ... die Briefe bezeugen deutlich, das die ganze Natur dazu beitrug ... Natürlich lässt sich die Liebe und die Stimmung der Natur gar nicht ohne weiteres trennen. Die Beruhigung durch beide hat ihren Grund darin, das Goethe sich ausgestürzt, das er doch in der Weite ... nichts Großes und voll Befriedigendes für sich gefunden hatte. Er war reif für den Frieden, als er sich nach Frieden sehnte."

- 8) WA.I.28.184; the allusion is in fact to Charlotte Buff and Maximiliane de la Roche. Cf. Petersen, Aus der Goethezeit, p. 27f.
- 9) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, pp. 328-9. Thümmel's poem has striking similarities with the Abendlied:

Was such ich in den Wäldern auf?	Er spendet Frieden aus. Warum
Ist es das scheue Wild?	Ward nicht auch mir ein Teil?
Es ruhe! denn in meinem Lauf	Ist die Natur für mich nur stumm.
Umschwebt mich nur Dein Bild.	Ihr Gipfel mir zu steil?
	teilt.
O wenn in gleichem milden Licht	Ob schon der Mond die Wolken
Das meine Dir erschien'.	Zerteilt er doch den Schmerz
Du würdest - ach! Du würdest nicht	In meinem Herzen nicht; es heil!
Des Jägers Anblick fliehn.	Das Grab nur solch ein Herz;
	Ruh
Der von der Sehnsucht Bangigkeit	Das, als es brach, ins Tal der
Ergriffen und gedrückt	Dein Bild hinübertrug --
Von Ahndungen, durch Raum und Zeit	Und dieses Herz verschmähtest Du,
Dir nach zum Himmel blickt.	Als es für dich noch schlug!

The closest parallels between the two poems are in the motifs, the image of the beloved, peace and the moon, though it is only in Goethe's poem that the three motifs are brought into close association. The Bild motif occurs again in a poem of 1776 inserted into a copy of Stella intended for Lili:

Im holden Tal, auf schneebedeckten Höhen  
 War stets dein Bild mir nah;  
 Ich sah's um mich in lichten Wolken wehen,  
 Im Herzen war mir's da.



- 10) Even Baumgart, who does not usually ignore biographical explanations for Goethe's poems, points out in this case: "Es ist ein schwieriges Unternehmen, für Goethes Liebeslyrik der frühesten Weimarer Zeit festzustellen, ob die alte Liebe oder die neue erwachende sie ihm eingegeben; im Grunde ist die Untersuchung so überflüssig als fruchtlos." (Goethes lyrische Dichtung, Heidelberg, 1931-39, Vol.1, p. 194).

- 11) Urfaust, ed. cit., p. 207; the original version of this stanza is closer to the Urfaust lines:

Des Menschen, der in aller Welt  
Nie findet Ruh noch Rast,  
Dem, wie zu Hause, so im Feld  
Sein Herze schwillt zur Last.

(WA.I.1.392).

- 12) Cf. below, pp. 118ff., 134f., 255ff., 274ff.
- 13) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 330.
- 14) Schopenhauer, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, Book 3, Chap. 30; cf. above, p. 36.
- 15) Cf. above, p. 98ff.; cf. also the letter to Charlotte of 5th July, 1781: "... Die Sonne hat uns durchglüht und der Mond erquickt wir haben beydes im reichen Maasse genossen" (WA.IV.5.166); and the passage from Die natürliche Tochter:

Der Sonne Glanz, der alles Leben regt,  
Des klaren Monds erquicklich leiser Schein  
Begegneten mir holder nicht als du. (WA.I.10.353).

- 16) Staiger points out: "Christliche Deutungen des angerufenen Friedens sind in dieser Epoche fernzuhalten." (Goethes Gedichte, Zürich, 1949, Vol.1, p. 447).
- 17) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 309: "In einem wenig beachteten Aufsatz hat Max Morris einmal behauptet, die Königin der Nacht in Goethes zweitem Teil der Zauberflöte trage Züge der Frau von Stein. Die biographischen Gründe, die er anführt, sind nicht stichhaltig. Dennoch haftet das Wort im Gedächtnis. Die Königin der Nacht, wie in Schinkels berühmter Berliner Inszenierung auf der Sichel des



Mondes erscheinend, in halb verschleiender Beleuchtung: das fügt sich zu dem Bilde der Frau, der die unvergeßlichsten Mondstimmungen der Goetheschen Lyrik gewidmet sind ..." (Cf. Max Morris, "Frau von Stein und die Königin der Nacht", in: Morris, Goethe-Studien, Berlin, 1897, Vol.1, pp. 96-104).

This association of the Königin der Nacht with Charlotte is speculative and hardly tenable, whether the basis for it is biographical or not; in Goethe's sequel to the Zauberflöte, she appears in an entirely baleful light, as she does in the second half of the Mozart opera. Had Goethe wished to assimilate the figure of Charlotte to that of the Queen of the Night, he would hardly have done so in such a negative way (even in the 1790's!), and might have chosen rather to model his version of the Queen on the figure who dominates the first part of the opera as an apparently beneficent deity, with Sarastro playing the baleful rôle. What is interesting here is that the Queen in the first part of the opera, at least, has very clear associations with the moon (due to her ultimate derivation from Masonic/Egyptian symbolism) and with the Madonna, the regina caeli (Cf. Brigid Brophy, Mozart the Dramatist, London, 1964, p. 148ff.) The association with the Madonna is clear enough from the appearance of the Queen in an aureole of stars and with a crescent moon at her feet -- indeed, Goethe himself in 1794 sketched a stage-design for her entry in precisely these terms (Cf. Fritz Klingenbeck, Die Zauberflöte, Wien und Berlin, 1966, p. 42: Entwurf von Joh. W. von Goethe zur Erscheinung der Königin der Nacht.)

Miss Brophy goes on to suggest that the whole sun-moon conflict between Sarastro and the Königin der Nacht in the opera is borrowed from the symbolism of the Isaic cult, but has been turned by Schikaneder (or whoever the librettist was) into "a metaphor of the Enlightenment" (p. 192); that is, the rays of the sun, symbolic of Enlightenment wisdom, dispels the unenlightened fantasy-sphere of the moon, or night ("Die Strahlen der Sonne vertreiben die Nacht, Zernichten der Heuchler erschlichene Nacht"). She points out that this kind of symbolism was familiar to 18th century audiences; it is evidently this familiar symbolism that Novalis was drawing on, directly or indirectly, when he



reversed the Zauberflöte process in the Klingsohr-Märchen in Heinrich von Ofterdingen, where the sun burns itself out to a clinker, and the reign of the imagination is begun under the auspices of Ginnistan, herself an allegorical representation of Romantic fantasy, and daughter of the moon (Novalis, Schriften, ed. P. Kluckhohn, Darmstadt, 1960, p. 307).

All this, however, points away from rather than towards any association of Goethe's Königin der Nacht with Charlotte; there may indeed be a lunar association in Goethe's mind when he makes Monostatos speak the following lines:

O Göttin! die du in den Gräften  
Verschlossen, mit dir selber wohnest,  
Bald in den höchsten Himmelslüften,  
Zum Trutz der stolzen Lichter, thronest ...  
(WA.I.12.184).

-- there is a traditional and mythological belief that the moon dwells in a subterranean or submarine cave prior to its journey across the sky (whence the Hecate/Persephone lunar deity alongside the Diana/Selene deity).

However, the association of Charlotte von Stein with the Madonna (whether or not the latter is related to the Queen of the Night) has a curious confirmation in a letter from Goethe to Charlotte written in October 1776:

... Sie kommen mir eine Zeither vor wie Madonna die gen Himmel fährt, vergebens daß ein Rückbleibender seine Arme nach ihr ausstreckt, vergebens daß sein scheidender trännenvoller Blick den ihrigen noch einmal niederwünscht, sie ist nur in den Glanz versunken der sie umgiebt, nur voll Sehnsucht nach der Krone die ihr überm Haupt schwebt ... (WA.IV.3.114).

This letter is quoted by Petersen (Aus der Goethezeit, p. 48), who sees the idealised image of Charlotte in the figure of the Mater Gloriosa in the final scene of Faust II. There is a similar image of Charlotte as the inaccessible Madonna who, like the moon, appears remote and veiled in clouds, in the poem An Lida:

Denn seit ich von dir bin,  
Scheint mir des schnellsten Lebens  
Lärmende Bewegung



Nur ein leichter Flor, durch den ich  
 deine Gestalt  
 Immerfort wie in Wolken erblicke ...

- 18) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, pp. 309-10.
- 19) Ibid., p. 315. It might be pointed out here that no claim is made that all the poems written during this period reflect exclusively such moods as those evoked in the moon-lyrics with which we are dealing. It is claimed only that in those poems which evoke this mood it is associated with the image of the moon to a striking extent. There are, of course, indications of a very different mood (such as that of Rastlose Liebe, written within a few months of Wanderers Nachtlied I); the restless mood is moreover often intimated in the very poems in which the image of the moon features -- and it is precisely here that the associations of the moon are thrown into relief.
- 20) Cf.(above,) Chapter 2, fn. 40.
- 21) Cf. WA.IV.2.7: "Es ist eine Leidenschaft, eine ganz unerwartete Leidenschaft, Sie wissen wie mich dergleichen in ein Cirkelgen werfen kann, daß ich Sonne, Mond und die lieben Sterne darüber vergesse ... (to Salzmann, 28th November, 1771). And WA.IV.2.293: " ... Wie ich durch die glühendsten Tränen der Liebe, Mond und Welt schaute und mich alles seelenvoll umgab" (to Auguste von Stolberg, 17th September, 1775).
- 22) Cf. WA.IV.2.203: "Und wie weh thats uns, als wir [den Teich] bey unfreundlicher Nacht verlassen musten. Der Mond wollte nicht herauf, nicht hinter den Schneewolken hervor, und heute thaut alles dahin ... (to J.L. Bockmann, 14-15th November, 1774).
- 23) Cf. WA.IV.1.264: "Bin ich bestimmt, Ihr Planet zu sein, so will ichs sein, es gern, es treu sein. Ein freundlicher Mond der Erde" (to Herder, summer, 1771).
- 24) Cf. WA.IV.3.164: "Wir sind in Rippach, werden bis Mitternacht ruhen und dann im Mondschein nach Leipzig ... Gute Nacht. Sie sind immer gleich und ich wie der Mond in seinen Veränderungen sich



such gleich!" In view of what we have said of the association of Charlotte with the moon, this simile is curious, since Goethe is here comparing himself with the moon. This comparison, however, seems to have been common enough in the language of the time -- a part of "the general current of trite proverb and comparison from which all daily speech draws" to which Lillian Hornstein alludes (cf. above, p. 16). Goethe uses the same expression in a later letter to C.F. von Reinhard: "Nun bin ich ... wieder auf meinem alten Flecke, und mache, bey aller Veränderlichkeit, wie der Mond doch immer das alte Gesicht" (WA.IV.21.390).

More curious in this respect is the fact that around this time Goethe begins to refer to Charlotte in his diaries by means of the symbol of the sun: ☉. This is a puzzling feature that has never been satisfactorily explained, unless it is a purely arbitrary symbol without any personal significance, as the other astrological symbols seem to be which Goethe uses to refer to close friends in his diaries.

- 25) Cf. below, p. 153ff.
- 26) Cf. the diary entries for 27th August and 30th October, 1776; 13th and 15th January, 17th February, 19th May, 24th July, 9th, 12th, and 13th November and 10th December, 1777; and 2nd and 4th January, 1779.
- 27) This assumption is based, statistically, on the dates given in Gerhard Fennel's Corpus der Goethezeichnungen. In spite of the fact that this is by far the fullest collection of Goethe's drawings to date (as yet uncompleted), it cannot lay claim to include every sheet of paper on which Goethe drew. However, the collection is full enough for such quantitative assumptions to be as meaningful as they possibly can be, and the editor himself certainly relies on them for such qualitative judgments as he makes. For instance, with reference to the number of drawings from the Italienische Reise, Fennel claims: "man mag auch an quantitativen Anteil die Leidenschaftlichkeit des bildnerisch-produktiven Antriebs in dieser Zeit ermessen. Zugleich drückt sich in der Forcierung bildnerischer Tätigkeit das Herannahen des Kulminationspunktes



der Problematik Dichter-Zeichner aus ("Vorbemerkung des Bearbeiters", Vol.2, p. 7).

- 28) Turn im Mondschein. Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 38.
- 29) Cf. Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 137, 137R, 153, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 185, 190 and 193, and figs. 3, 4 and 5. The dates given by Fennel are as accurate as can be ascertained; for many there is no positive means of dating within less than a year, and dating is done more by an examination of water-marks, paper, etc., than by stylistic criteria. Attempts have been made to relate some of the drawings to explicit references in the letters and diaries: cf. WA.III.1.31: "Abend Mondenzeichnung" (13th January, 1777), and WA.III.1.76: "Herrlicher Aufgang des Mondes. Gezeichnet" (2nd January, 1779) -- but no drawings can be definitely related to these references.
- 30) Hans Wahl, Goethe als Zeichner der deutschen Landschaft, Erfurt, 1951, Abb. 14: Mond in Wolken (cf. fig. 2).
- 31) Ludwig Münz, Goethes Zeichnungen und Radierungen, Wien, 1949, p. 43.
- 32) Wahl, op. cit., pp. xiii-xiv; Wahl describes these drawings as "Geschwister seiner gleichzeitigen Lyrik ... Dort, wo es uns aus seinen Zeichnungen wie von selbst entgegenklingt: Füllest wieder Busch und Tal, ... Und ich geh meinen alten Gang, ... etc."
- 33) Wahl, Neun Parkzeichnungen Goethes, Berlin, 1923, p. 5 (Abb. VII), = Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 156; cf. fig. 4, which is very similar to Mond über nachtdunklen Bäumen.
- 34) E.g. Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 137R, 155, 156, 158 and 185.
- 35) E.g. Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 156 and 158, and Wahl, Goethe als Zeichner, Abb. 14 (Mond in Wolken); cf. figs. 2 and 4.
- 36) Wahl, Goethe als Zeichner, p. 52 (Abb. 12, Mond zwischen Bäumen, = Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 160). Fennel disputes Wahl's dating, and hence also his relation of this drawing to An den Mond (p. 66); cf. fig. 3.



- 37) Wahl, ibid., Abb. 41. = Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 159; of. fig. 5.
- 38) "... Haben Sie doch die Güte mir einen von denen Rahmen zu schicken worin die Mondscheine hängen über Ihren Schreibtisch" (WA.IV.5.335); of. Wahl, Goethe als Zeichner, p. 60. This does not, of course, give any evidence about the origin of the drawing; it remains a matter for speculation whether this picture was given to Frau von Stein as a companion-piece to the poem so clearly associated with her.
- 39) Münz, op. cit., p. 19, Ann. 38.
- 40) Cf. Fennel, Vol.1, p. 65 and p. 64.
- 41) In particular the letters to Charlotte of 10th July: "... Wie schön die Nacht war und der Mond auf der Saale im Thal läßt sich nicht sagen" (WA.IV.3.164), and of 13th September, 1777: "In dem grausen linden Dämmer des Monds die tiefen Gründe, Wiesen, Büsche, Wälder und Waldblößen" (WA.IV.3.175).
- 42) Cf. WA.III.1.31: "M. 13. Jan. ... Abend Mondenzeichnung ... 15. Jan. ... Abend Mond gezeichnet". Cf. also 17th February, 1777 (WA.III.1.34).
- 43) Fennel, Vol.1, Abb. 190.
- 44) 10th December, 1777: "... Nun Liebste tret ich vor die Thüre hinaus da liegt der Brocken in hohen herrlichen Mondschein über den Fichten vor mir" (WA.IV.3.200).
- 45) Cf. above, Chapter 2, fn. 19.
- 46) Cf. Appendix, Vol.2, pp. 1-24.
- 47) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 332: "Nach wie vor befinden wir uns in der scheinbar beschämenden, aber dem Wesen lyrischer Poesie vielleicht im tiefsten Sinne gerechten Lage, von unverständlicher oder nur halbverständlicher Sprache mehr besaubert zu sein als von unzweideutiger Klarheit".
- 48) Cf. J. Wiegand, Zur lyrischen Kunst, Tübingen, 1956, pp. 120-22: "Wir hören nur allgemein von froh- und



trüber Zeit, von verrauschender Treue, von dem, was so köstlich ist. Auch das paßt zu dem mondlichen Halbdunkel, das über dem Ganzen liegt, und welche die durchgehende Stimmung des Liedes ist; und dadurch wird vielleicht doch die Überschrift An den Mond gerechtfertigt. Auch das letzte Wort 'Nacht' soll vielleicht das geheimnisvolle Halbdunkel noch einmal zusammenfassen ... Wohin der Sinnende auf seinem Gang zufällig das Auge lenkt, das gibt ihm assoziativ Gedanken und Empfindungen ein."

Wilhelm Schneider (Liebe zum deutschen Gedicht, Freiburg im B., 1958, p. 135) also points out how the effect of the poem "geht von der Sinnfülle der einzelnen Worte und ihrem Reichtum an Beziehungen aus."

- 49) Schneider (ibid.) points out that the description of the moonlit landscape in the first two stanzas is not so much "Naturschilderung" as "Naturstimmung" -- the absence of detail blurs description and aids the process of association. He also points out that the effect of the poem is to reveal the inner landscape ("mein Gefild") of the poet's mind; and though Schneider is here speaking specifically of the second version, the same holds true of the original.
- 50) Körner (SdpJ, 25, p. 19) comes to the conclusion that the "du" must refer to the moon rather than the "Liebste" on curious grounds -- that Goethe would hardly confess the instability of his heart to Charlotte von Stein.
- 51) Ibid., p. 20.
- 52) Ibid., p. 22: "Nicht aus der Liebe zu einer Frau, vielmehr aus der Freundschaft mit einem Mann quillt die verzichtende Seligkeit, so die Schlusstrophen lobsingend."
- 53) J. Elema ("Zur Interpretation von Goethes An den Mond", Neophilologus, 46, 1962, p. 40) comes to the same conclusion on interesting but not wholly convincing grounds. He sees the association of the moon and the "Liebste" in the second stanza as an allusion to Endymion and Luna -- one which Goethe was later to make use of in the revision of An Luna. There seems to be little evidence for this in the



poem as it stands -- but Elema makes the reservation that this allusion is anything but explicit, that it "vom Rande des Bewusstseins her, assoziativ hineinspielt."

- 54) The lines in Goethe's letter to Charlotte: "Dieser einladende Trauer hat was gefährlich anziehendes wie das Wasser selbst, und der Abglanz der Sterne des Himmels der aus beyden leuchtet lockt uns" (WA.IV.3.208) has often been quoted in connexion with the first version of An den Mond by critics who insist on seeing in it a reference to the suicide. Although the lines themselves certainly refer to the tragedy, and were written to Charlotte only two days after the incident, there is no reason to relate them directly to the poem. More generally, however, they do express the association of moon, stars and water which is evoked by Goethe in this and other lyrics, particularly those of the early Weimar period; cf. Der Fischer, Und ich geh meinen alten Gang, Gesang der Geister über den Wassern, and the references above, p. 120ff. and below in the reports of the Schweizer Reise, p. 153ff.
- 55) Schneider similarly indicates that the normal criteria of simile, metaphor, etc., are not sufficient to explain the relationship between image and meaning, which is here a fluid, associative relationship: "Naturerscheinung und Seelenvorgang bedingen einander" (op. cit., p. 136).
- 56) The various arguments pro and contra on this point are not conclusive; two critics with opposing views are Körner (SdpJ., 25, p. 21ff.) and Elema (Neophilologus, 46, p. 43ff). Körner insists that the poem is celebrating friendship, Elema that it is a love-poem.
- 57) Cf. Elema, Neophilologus, 46, p. 44, who prefers the immediacy of the first version and sees in the second only "den dünnen Ton, den allzu glatten Wortlaut, die sprachlich nicht sehr starken Wiederholungen ... nirgends begegnet man genialen Funden, wie in der ersten Fassung."
- 58) Cf. the similar change in the revision of Die schöne Nacht (above, p. 57).



- 59) Elena sees the change of object as reflecting the change in the "psychological relationship" of Goethe and Frau von Stein from the erotic to the platonic, and reads even further: "Die erste Fassung ist 'kryptischer' Ausdruck einer leidenschaftlichen stürmischen Liebe vor der Liebeserfüllung, die zweite Fassung verschleierter Ausdruck einer tiefen Neigung nach der Liebeserfüllung" (Neophilologus, 46, p. 46). Other suggestions for the identity of the "Freund" include Karl-August, Herder and Lavater.
- 60) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 333. Cf. an earlier letter from Goethe to Frau von Stein of 16th September, 1776: "Ich bin in einem unendlich reinen Mittelzustand ohne Freud und Schmerz, zusammengepackt von Tausenderley Umständen ohne gedrängt zu seyn" (WA.IV.3.108).
- 61) Schneider, op. cit., p. 138.
- 62) Apart from the Gesang der Geister über den Wassern, the later poem Dauer im Wechsel comes very close to the imagery and meaning of An den Mond:

Und was sich an jener Stelle  
 Nun mit deinem Namen nennt,  
 Kam herbei wie eine Welle,  
 Und so eilt's zum Element.

- 63) Schneider (op. cit., p. 145) has pointed out the symmetry and unity of the poem in this progression of mood from calm to orisis, and back to a positive equilibrium, which he sketches thus:

st. 1								st. 9
Nacht	st. 2					st. 8		Nacht
	Freund	st. 3			st. 7	Freund		
		Freude	st. 4		st. 6	Freude &		
		& Schmerz	Flus	st. 5	Flus	Schmerz		
				Mitte				
				& Wende				

Mayer also describes the fifth stanza as the "Tiefpunkt des ganzen inneren Vorgangs." (G. Mayer, "Die innere Entwicklung in Goethes Lied An den Mond", NJWJ, 4, 1928, p. 722).



- 64) The later poem Dauer im Wechsel not only has similar imagery to An den Mond in the wave and the river, but also, in the last stanza, a more explicit version of the theme implied in the Mondlied:

Danke, daß die Gunst der Musen  
Unvergänglich's verheißt,  
Den Gehalt in deinem Busen  
Und die Form in deinem Geist.

Even so, the later poem lacks the curious feature of An den Mond -- that the river not only suggests to the poet a renewed awareness of his own creative powers, but this symbol of transience itself suggests the theme of impermanence which is the substance of the poem.

- 65) A recent critic still denies the second version the unity which Schneider and Mayer claim for it; cf. R.D. Gray, Poems of Goethe, Cambridge, 1966, p. 36: "In the final version, the two solutions [i.e. those of stanzas 6 and 7 and stanzas 8 and 9] stand side by side, without a trace of linkage". Harold Jantz, on the other hand, claims more unity for the second version than the first: "The lyric in its first version is not a great one; its latent possibilities first had to be realised poetically, particularly by the development of its vital unifying middle section, but also by the slight yet important changes which harmonise beginning and end" (H. Jantz, "Goethe's lyric An den Mond -- structure and unity", GQ, 26, 1953, p. 32).
- 66) G. Mayer, NJWJ, 4, p. 723. Körner (SdpJ, 25, p. 34ff.) sees a considerable difference in the import of the last stanzas of the revised version from that of the original. He sees the first version as a positive, decisive acceptance of seclusion and withdrawal -- "Selig ist dennoch!", as he interprets it -- whereas in the revised version the poet is not affirming something achieved, but regretting something which might be, but has not been achieved: "Als begehrt's, noch nicht beschert's Resignationsglück, fast bitter klingt es: 'Selig wäre freilich' ...". One feels, however, that Körner relies too much on biographical support for his textual interpretation in seeing the second version as an expression of Goethe's growing dissatisfaction and



unease in Weimar during the 1780's, as opposed to his acceptance of seclusion there some ten years earlier: "Aus dem gelassenen Aufruf zu freudig bejahter Einschränkung ist ein schwermütiger Sang vom enttäuschenden Leben geworden" (p. 38).

- 67) It has often been assumed that the "Was" of the last stanza refers to the moon; as Dr. Gray points out (op. cit., p. 37), Charlotte von Stein evidently took it as such, and expressed this clearly in her version:

Was ...  
In dem himmlischen Gewand  
Glänzet bei der Nacht.

In Goethe's version, however, it seems that the "Was" refers to much more than the moon alone, to the whole complex of introspective "twilight" thoughts and feelings which are inspired in the inscape of the poet's mind by the mood of the opening stanzas.

- 68) There is little to say about Frau von Stein's version, except to point out that she took over indiscriminately from Goethe's two versions only what seemed to her best suited to her parodistic Gelegenheitsgedicht. In the process, much of the effect of Goethe's version has gone by the board. There is no longer any close association of the moon with the beloved, since the simile in stanza 2 has been changed to a subordinate clause. The subtle elegiac twilight mood of the third stanza has also disappeared, replaced by bitter reproach, and the symbolic polarities of moon and river imagery are lost, as well as the whole significance of stanzas 6 and 7 which form a vital link in the development and structure of Goethe's second version.

- 69) Not only the moon, but the stars, are for Goethe at this time symbols of eternal and unchanging values; in the poem An Lida, they are used in contrast to the transience and instability of the aurora borealis -- two images which recur, possibly with reference to this poem, in Goethe's late lyric Um Mitternacht (cf. below, p. 268ff.):

Wie durch des Nordlichts bewegliche Strahlen  
Ewige Sterne schimmern...

(An Lida)



Cf. also above, p. 56, Vol.2, (Chapter 2, fn.61).

- 70) Staiger, Goethe. Vol.1. pp. 335-6.
- 71) "Was jetzt, in Weimar, geschieht, begeistert und blendet die Nachwelt allerdings nicht, erweist sich aber, im Ganzen betrachtet, als ungleich wunderbarer Vorgang ... Alle Zeichen sprechen dafür, das Goethe, wie Klinger, Lenz und Müller, zu jener deutschen Jugend gehört, der einmal, zu früh, um ein ganzes Leben damit zu bestreiten, die Stunde blüht, die einzig der Tod oder Wahnsinn vor künftiger Öde, vor Unmut, Hypochondrie oder nichtigem Dunkel in leerer Manier und Virtuosität zu bewahren vermag. Doch Goethe entschließt sich, abzubreehen und zu warten, um eines Tages vielleicht von vorn beginnen zu dürfen ..." (ibid., p. 340).
- 72) The passages quoted below in connexion with the Swiss Journey are taken, not from the account of the journey which Goethe published (WA.I.19.193ff.), but from the letters written from Switzerland to Frau von Stein and others, from which the Briefe aus der Schweiz are largely compiled.
- 73) As, for example, in the letters of 25th and 26th September and 17th and 20th October, 1779 (WA.IV. 4.65, 68, 88 & 90).
- 74) Staiger sees the significance of the moon's reflection in water as it occurs in the letters from Switzerland as very similar to that of the imagery of the second version of An den Mond -- namely that the moon assumes value as a symbol of permanence and order in contrast to the flux of the watery element: "Den stillen Gefährten der Nächte an der Ilm, den Mond, begrüßt er auch hier ... tröstlich, nicht verführerisch, leuchtet der Widerglanz des Mondes im Spiegel des Genfer Sees, des Lac de Joux, ein Bürge des Göttlichen auch in den Gründen, wo alles ängstlich-verworren und menschlicher Fassung fremd zu werden droht ... zwischen Himmel und Erde gleitet der Blick beständig hin und her und scheint sich um eine Beziehung der beiden getrennten Reiche zu bemühen."
- 75) Cf. above, p. 64.
- 76) Eekermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. oit., Part 1, p. 55.



- 77) Goethe seems to have been given to curious references to this ballad in the face of persistent questioning; e.g. his remark to Mme. de Staël that "Todesglut" referred not to "l'air brûlant", as she had it, but to the "Kohlengluth in der Küche, an welcher die Fische gebraten wurden" (Goethes Gespräche, ed. P. von Biedermann, Vol.1, p. 354).
- 78) Cf. L.A. Willoughby, Goethe Poet and Thinker, p. 164, and below, pp. 177ff., 202ff., 251ff., 283ff., 325ff.
- 79) Cf. Ingrid Dzialas, "Auffassung und Darstellung der Elemente bei Goethe", Germanische Studien, 216 (1939), pp. 34-5: "Das Wasser ist nicht allein unergründlich tief, es ist auch ein Spiegel des Himmels, der Gestirne und des eigenen Angesichts. Diese Spiegelung verbindet das irdische Element mit dem Himmel, mit dem Göttlichen. Das Wasser ist der Abglanz der jenseitigen Welt -- daher stammt die Macht, die es auf den Menschen auszuüben vermag. Der Mensch sucht nicht die abgründige Tiefe, sondern den Abglanz des Göttlichen".
- 80) W. Müller (Erscheinungsform des Wassers bei Goethe, p. 80) similarly points out: "Die Krone, die der Knabe sieht, ist offenbar durch den Mondschein veranlaßt", and Hans Schulz (Anschauung und Darstellung des Mondes, p. 64) compares Erlkönig with Willkommen und Abschied: "In beiden Gedichten entsteht das Gespenstische durch Nebel und eine dämmernde Beleuchtung durch den Mond". J. Hennig ("Perception and deception in Goethe's Erlkönig and its sources", MLQ, 17, 1956, pp. 227-35) points out how the landscape in the poem is devoid of colour (the reference to "gülden Gewand" not being part of the natural scene, and the adjective being used to describe quality rather than colour). Under the influence of dim moonlight, colours are reduced to a pattern of light and shade.
- 81) Cf. especially Bürger's Lenore:
- Sieh da! sieh da! Am Hochgericht  
Tanzt um des Rades Spindel,  
Halb sichtbarlich bei Mondenlicht  
Ein luftiges Gesindel, etc., etc.
- 82) There is a curious classical counterpart to this in



the lines Goethe wrote in homage to, and in imitation of Wieland in the same year as Erlkönig:

Wenn zu den Reihen der Nymphen, versammelt in  
   heiliger Mondnacht,  
 Sich die Grazien heimlich herab von Olympus  
   gesellen ...  
   (WA.I.2.128).

The association of spirits, whether benevolent or malevolent, with moonlight, and particularly with moonlight shining through mist, has already been noted in connexion with An Luna and the Urfaust monologue (of. above, pp. 64f & 94); and very much later Goethe uses the association in his tribute to the English meteorologist Luke Howard which forms the companion-piece to his own meteorological Witterungslehre, and the symbolism which he associates with the various cloud-formations:

#### Stratus

Wenn von dem stillen Wasserspiegel-Plan  
 Ein Nebel hebt den flachen Teppich an,  
 Der Mond, dem Wallen des Erscheins vereint,  
 Als ein Gespenst Gespenster bildend scheint ...  
   (Howards Ehrengedächtnis).

- 83) The origin of Goethe's title Erlkönig is usually attributed to a misunderstanding on Herder's part when he translated the title of the original Danish ballad Ellerkonge, meaning "Elfenweib", as Erlkönigs Tochter, thus giving the elf-king, or "Ellerkonge", a mistaken association with the alder-tree. Boyd (Notes to Goethe's Poems, Vol. 1, p. 171) claims that "nowhere in Danish mythology is an ellerkonge known to play the rôle assigned to him by Goethe". This is directly contradicted by Robert Graves (The White Goddess, p. 191fn.), who points out the very close association of spirits or elves with the alder-tree: "The Danish Ellerkonge is the alder-king Bran, who carries off children to the other world ... Thus in Goethe's well-known ballad ... Ellerkonge is correctly translated 'Erlkönig'."
- 84) Peter Schmidt interprets the red moon of the Walpurgisnacht in terms of Goethe's Farbenlehre: "Beim Aufstieg zum Blocksberg glüht endlich der ganze Berg 'morgenrötlich', ebenso wie der Mond mit 'später Glut' leuchtet. Hier handelt es sich um



Phänomene der Farbenlehre, die goldene Farbe des Mammonberges und die gelbe des Mondes werden durch die Nebel ins Rote gesteigert" (P. Schmidt, Goethes Farbensymbolik, Berlin, 1965, p. 208).

- 85) Cf. the refrain of Lenore:

Graut Liebohen auch? Der Mond scheint hell!  
Hurrah! Die Toten reiten schnell!

and Annette's use of the motif in supernatural ballads like Der Fundator or Vorgeschichte:

Der Vollmond lagert den blauen Schein  
Auf des schlafenden Freiherrn Locke,  
Hernieder bohrend in kalter Kraft  
Die Vampirzunge, des Strahles Schaft.

However, Goethe's use of the image of the moon, as is his whole treatment of the theme, is very much less melodramatic than that of either Bürger or Annette -- in the Totentanz, particularly, he is using some humour and irony in the narrative:

Nun hebt sich der Schenkel, nun wackelt das Bein,  
Gebärden da gibt es vertrackte ...

- 86) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 498: "Außer dem Nebelglanz über der Ilm und wenigen Nacht- und Winterstücken findet sich nichts in den Jahren 1776-82, was an Geheimnis und Innigkeit mit den Naturdichtungen der Straßburger und Frankfurter Zeit wetteifern könnte."
- 87) "Wie und da mag sich ein Anklang finden von einem leidenschaftlichen Ergötzen an ländlichen Naturgegenständen, sowie von einem ernsten Drange, das ungeheure Geheimnis, das sich in stetem Erschaffen und Zerstören an den Tag gibt, zu erkennen, ob sich schon dieser Trieb in ein unbestimmtes, unbefriedigtes Hinbrüten zu verlieren scheint" (Geschichte meiner botanischen Studien, 1817; HA.13, 149).
- 88) Cf. below, p. 220ff.
- 89) The Singspiele and Maskenzüge dealt with above (p. 79ff.) continue throughout the early Weimar years and even later; as we have seen, they have little connexion with the use of the moon as a lyrical image in the poems.



- 90) Cf. below, p. 249ff.
- 91) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, pp. 536-7: "Je tiefer man in das geheimere Leben der ersten Weimarer Jahre eindringt, desto mehr überzeugt man sich, daß jede Anspielung und jede Beziehung wörtlich zu nehmen ist, daß alles auf Frau von Stein hinweist und Frau von Stein aus allem spricht ... Ihr Wesen ist sichtbar im Licht des Mondes und in dem schimmernden Eisgebirge über den brauenden Nebel der Täler ... Sein Wesen, von unerfüllter Liebe bestimmt, ist eigentümlich geteilt: hier das ruhelose, unablässige Wogen des Gefühls, der Fluch und die Gunst des Augenblicks, und dort die regungslose Klarheit, verheißungsvoll, doch selten erreichbar ... Es ist das Gegenüber des Flusses und des Gestirns im Lied 'An den Mond'; und der ganze voritalienische Goethe verklärt sich in der Gebärde des Jünglings, der nachts den Körper aus den Fluten der Ilm dem kühlen Licht entgegenhebt, umrauscht von Vergänglichkeit und gegen das Ewige hingedeht, das bleich und fern am Himmel glänzt."
- 92) As we shall see, the abeyance of the moon as a lyrical motif in Goethe's works after the Italienische Reise cannot be explained wholly in terms of Frau von Stein; in the two decades after his return from Italy, the purely lyrical element in Goethe's works as a whole becomes relatively rare (cf. below, p. 210ff.), and the moon as a poetic motif only reappears with any significance with the renewal of the lyrical impulse in the West-östliche Divan and the late lyrics. The image, however, by no means disappears finally from Goethe's work after the Italienische Reise, as Franz Thorau, for example, suggests when he claims: "... daß die frühe Innigkeit in des Dichters Verhältnis zum Monde mehr und mehr ... aufhört, zumal er die einstige Geliebte, die ihm zur Verherrlichung des Mondes mit den Anlaß gab, jetzt entbehren kann, da seine Selbsterziehung vollendet ist" (Anschauung und Darstellung der Sonne, p. 81).
- 93) WA.I.30.266. This remark was not included by Goethe in his letter to Charlotte from Rome on 2nd February, 1787, although the letter, and the passage in the report of the Italienische Reise in which this phrase is found, are otherwise almost



identical (cf. WA.I.30.265-6: "Von der Schönheit,  
im vollen Mondschein Rom zu durchgehen ... den Vor-  
hof der Peterskirche und andere große Straßen und  
Plätze", and WA.IV.8.161).



Notes to Chapter Four

- 1) Cf. W. Hof, "Um Mitternacht. Goethe und Charlotte von Stein im Alter", Euphorion, 45 (1950), pp. 50-82, and Julius Petersen, "Goethe und Charlotte von Stein", in: Petersen, Aus der Goethezeit, Leipzig, 1932, p. 45ff.
- 2) Cf. the letter of October 1776: "... vergebens, daß ein Rückbleibender seine Arme nach ihr ausstreckt, daß sein scheidender trännenvoller Blick den ihrigen noch einmal niederwünscht, sie ist nur in den Glanz versunken der sie umgibt, nur voll Sehnsucht nach der Krone die ihr überm Haupt schwebt ..." (WA.IV. 3.114). Cf. also Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, pp. 524-5: "Es ist der Geist der Reinheit, der aus dem Munde der taurischen Priesterin spricht, die Gestalt der Prinzessin im Tasso beseelt, die schimmernden Eisgebirge umfließt und niederstrahlt im Licht des Mondes, der beschwichtigende Geist der Frau von Stein."
- 3) Cf. below, pp. 293f. and 346ff.
- 4) Cf. below, p. 266f.
- 5) Cf. the similar, but less lyrical appeal of Iphigenia in Euripides' play:

Dost thou not love thy brother, Holy One?  
What marvel if I also love mine own?

(The Iphigenie in Tauris of Euripides, translated by Gilbert Murray, London, 1910, vv. 1403-4).

- 6) The same image of sun and moon in their mythological relationship is used by Goethe to illustrate the entoptic principle of Wiederholte Spiegelung in the Paradoxe Seitenblick auf die Astrologie from his treatise on Entoptische Farben:  
 "... Und so haben die Astrologen, deren Lehre auf gläubige unermüdete Beobachtung des Himmels begründet war, unsere Lehre von Schein, Rück-, Wider- und Nebenschein vorempfunden, nur irrten sie darin, daß sie das Gegenüber für ein Widerwärtiges erklärten, da doch der direkte Rückschein und Widerschein für eine freundliche Erwidernng des ersten



Scheins zu achten. Der Vollmond steht der Sonne nicht feindlich entgegen, sondern sendet ihr gefällig das Licht zurück, das sie ihm verlieh; es ist Artemis, die sehnsuchtsvoll den Bruder anblickt."

R.D. Gray (Goethe the Alchemist, pp. 238-43) points out this passage from Iphigenie as being part of the alchemistic notion of the union of opposites which runs through much of Goethe's work; this rather far-reaching analogy is, however, treated with some reservation by Dr. Gray himself, who stresses the general, rather than the particularly alchemistic significance of the prayer: "Sun and moon, day and night, light and darkness are one, a brother and sister joined in harmony. Iphigenie, by her prayer, recalls to Orestes the possibility of a unity after the divine pattern. In the recognition of this heavenly concord, Orestes also can escape the curse" (p. 241). Goethe uses the image of sun and moon to represent the alchemistic union of opposites only once with any conscious intention, and the passage itself, in the Mummenschanz of Faust II, is of no great significance. The astrologer, prompted by Mephisto, utters a speech which has little relevance to its context:

Ja, wenn zu Sol sich Luna fein gesellt,  
Zum Silber Gold, dann ist es heitre Welt!

Staiger (Goethe, Vol.3, p. 281), suggests that this passage was written earlier without any reference to its context in Faust, and inserted by Goethe willy-nilly into the Mummenschanz. Cf. also below, fn. 73.

- 7) Cf. below, pp. 179ff., 251f., 308ff.
- 8) Cf. E.M. Wilkinson, "Goethe's Tasso, the tragedy of the poet", in: Wilkinson and Willoughby, Goethe, Poet and Thinker, pp. 75-94.
- 9) Cf. W. Rasch, Goethes Tasso, die Tragödie des Dichters, Stuttgart, 1954, p. 49: "Der schöpferische Drang, von dem er spricht, betätigt sich unversehens und formt das Bild seiner selbst. Wie Goethe das Phänomen des Dichterischen in Tasso-Drama zu Dichtung werden läßt, in symbolischer Gestaltung anschaulich macht, so tut es Tasso mit diesen Versen."



- 10) Cf. vv. 908-10:

... Wenig nur.  
Doch etwas, nicht mit Worten, mit der Tat  
Wünscht ich's zu sein ...

-- here again Tasso swings from one extreme to the other, the change from a negative, "reflected" personality to a virile one is violent, expressing the polarities of Tasso's moods and character:

O daß die edelste der Taten sich  
Hier sichtbar vor mir stellte, rings umgeben  
Von gräßlicher Gefahr! ...  
Ich ... forderte  
Die besten Menschen mir zu Freunden auf,  
Unmögliches mit einer edlen Sehar  
Nach ihrem Wink und Willen zu vollbringen ...  
(vv. 1170-77).

- 11) Cf. also Tasso's earlier declaration to the Princess:

... vernimmt  
Mein horchend Ohr ein Wort von deiner Lippe,  
So wird ein neuer Tag um mich herum,  
Und alle Bande fallen von mir los.  
(vv. 756-9).

- 12) The Princess also uses images of sun and twilight to express hope and despair:

Welch eine Dämmerung fällt nun vor mir ein!  
Der Sonne Pracht, das fröhliche Gefühl  
Des hohen Tags, der tausendfachen Welt  
Glanzreiche Gegenwart ist öd und tief  
Im Nebel eingehüllt, der mich umgibt.  
(vv. 1869-73).

In a recent study of Tasso (Konfiguration, München, 1965), Gerhard Neumann has devoted a section to an analysis of metaphors of light in the play, and particularly of the images of sun and moon. Neumann covers very much the same material as the present study, though on the basis of a different thesis, examining the way in which the use of sun and moon-imagery reflects the development of the relationship between the characters:

"Wie sich die Lichtmetaphorik leise verwandelt,



deutet sich in ihr das Verhältnis Tassos zu Leonore und der Prinzessin an ... Ein Metaphernpaar (Mond - Sonne) wird zum Katalysator der Konfiguration; an ihm verdeutlichen sich die wechselnden Beziehungen der Figuren. In dem Verhältnis Tasso-Leonore offenbaren sich widerstreitende Kräfte, eine Welt ist der anderen lästig, ja störend; ein entschiedener Gegensatz tut sich auf. Umgekehrt in der Konfiguration Prinzessin - Tasso: An denselben Metaphern Mond - Sonne bestätigt sich die Zusammengehörigkeit der Figuren. Nicht mehr feindliche Welten, sondern ergänzende Spiegelung. Spiegelverkehrt einer als des anderen Sonne, spiegelverkehrt einer des anderen Licht zurückwerfend: Sonne und Mond als einander supplierende Welten ... " (pp. 104 & 107).

- 13) Goethe uses the same image much later in the Novelle Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren from the Wanderjahre to illustrate a similar relationship in a different situation: "Der späte Mond der zur Nacht noch anständig leuchtet verblast vor der aufgehenden Sonne; der Liebeswahn des Alters verschwindet in Gegenwart leidenschaftlicher Jugend ..." (WA.I.24. 339; cf. below, p. 240).
- 14) It must be stressed that in Tasso, as in Iphigenie, the images, or the passages in which they occur, however independent they may seem in themselves, cannot be regarded as separate in the way that a lyric poem can be. Not only must the person speaking be taken into account more fully than the subject, or "lyrische Ich" of a poem, but also the expression must be seen in its relation to the action and situation of the play. It would have been impossible, for instance, for Tasso to use this image in a more favourable situation; he would hardly have compared his existence so unfavourably with the pale light of the moon by day in the first act.
- 15) Rasch, op. cit., p. 135.
- 16) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, p. 413.
- 17) Cf. again Staiger, who points out that in IV.2, in order to express Tasso's relationship with Antonio and with it that of the two whole aspects of existence, Goethe "findet jenes Gleichnis, das tief in



Goethes geheimster Erfahrung der ersten Weimarer Jahre wurzelt, der stillen Nächte an der Ilm, und dessen Beziehungsreichtum keine Interpretation ausschöpft (*ibid.*, p. 399). It must still be held, however, that though there are lines in Tasso's simile which recall the positive effect of moonlight of the early Weimar lyrics:

Der stille Mond, der dich bei Nacht erfreut,  
Dein Auge, dein Gemüt mit seinem Schein  
Unwiderstehlich lockt ...

-- what is most essential to the image as it stands in Tasso, the notion of reflected light, of illusion and insignificance, is quite foreign to the image of the moon as it appears in the earlier lyrics.

- 18) The exceptions are those metaphors which Tasso elaborates beyond the demands of the dramatic action (Cf. E.M. Wilkinson, Goethe Poet and Thinker, p. 80ff.). Otherwise, the language of the play in general is characterised by its conscious and deliberate clarity of expression and analogy; cf. Johannes Mantey, Der Sprachstil in Goethes Tasso, Berlin, 1959, p. 9: "Versucht man ... einen allgemeinen Eindruck von der Sprache des Tasso zu gewinnen, so ergeben sich als ihre wesentlichen Kennzeichen die gedankliche Helle und begriffliche Klarheit ihrer Aussagen."
- 19) Cf. again Mantey, who similarly points out "das eine Reihe von einzelnen oder innerhalb eines Sinnbezirks aufeinander bezogenen Wörtern insofern als Träger stilistischen Ausdrucks zu betrachten sind, als sie durch ihren bevorzugten und betonten Gebrauch bestimmte Vorstellungen, die dem Denken und Fühlen der handelnden Personen in besonderer Weise naheliegen, immer von neuem ins Bewusstsein heben und dadurch deren Sinnesart charakterisieren helfen" (*op. cit.*, p. 9), and that "in den Ausdrucksqualitäten des Wortschatzes sehr wesentliche, im Text kaum oder gar nicht explizit ausgesprochene Elemente der Sinnesart der handelnden Personen sichtbar werden, die über ihre Weltansicht und Lebensauffassung, ihre Wertungsmaßstäbe, ihre psychologische Besonderheit und über das Wesen ihrer wechselseitigen Beziehungen Aufschluss geben" (*ibid.*, pp. 185-6).



- 20) Erich discusses the imagery of "Schein" in Tasso with reference to the allegories of the Maskenzüge which were written during the pre-Italian years, and sees the garden and park-landscape of Tasso, and indeed that of Die Wahlverwandtschaften much later, as the first signs of Goethe's coming to terms with the ideal, artificial nature of Classicism. The formal garden, or park, is associated in Tasso's mind with the bucolic, arcadian landscape of his vision of the Golden Age: "Eine reine, sündenlose Natur in eigenartiger Verbindung religiöser Paradieses- und antiker Arkadienvorstellung stellt ein normativ 'wahreres' Naturideal gegen die reale Natur und entfaltet von hier aus eine neue Seite des zentralen Problems der Klassik, des Problems des Scheins. Schein ist der Park. Er beraubt die Natur vital-wirklicher Kräfte zugunsten eines fiktiven Wahrheitsbegriffs... Die Natur des höfischen Parkes ist nicht wirklicher, aber 'wahrer' als die umliegende Natur."

The symbolism of nature and art implied in this distinction between "wirklicher" and "wahrer" nature is also expressed in the Maskenzüge (and in Tasso!) by the symbolism of sun and moon, gold and silver, day and night: Erich characterises the general allegorical themes of nearly all the Maskenzüge written around and after 1781 as follows:

"Am Anfang steht meist die Unschuld reiner Natur, ausgedrückt in den Symbolen Liebe, Eintracht, Gold, Sonne, Blumen usw. Dann folgt das, was der Mensch selber erschaffen hat, oder was sich als zweite, fremde Welt über die Naturwelt erhebt, in den Symbolen von Kunst, Überfluß, Silber, Mond, Reichtum, Früchten usw. ... Natur und Kunst offenbaren sich also in einem Wandel von der Blume zur Frucht, von Glanz der Sonne zum Abglanz des Mondes ... Hier taucht eine Symbolik auf, die seitdem Goethe nie wieder verlassen hat. Zum erstenmal repräsentieren Blumen und Frucht, Sonne und Mond, Tag und Nacht ... zwei polare Welten, die ohne einander nichts sind, wechselseitig erst das 'Ganze' ergeben, aber dennoch in scharfer Spannung zueinander verharrend das zentrale Problem der klassischen Kunstlehre 'Natur und Kunst' formulieren und ausdrücken wollen." (Erich, Symbolik von Faust II, pp. 150 and 148). As late as 1818, as Erich points out, the day and night, or sun and moon, symbolism implied in the Antonio-Tasso polarity, is expressed



in the Maskenzug in honour of the Kaiserin Mutter Maria Feodorowna, in which "die Nacht den Raum der Poesie vertritt, der Tag den Raum von Leben und praktischer Wissenschaft" (Ibid., p. 149; of. WA.I.16.250f. and 302ff.).

- 21) Ludwig Münz, Goethes Zeichnungen und Radierungen, Wien, 1949, p. 69.
- 22) Palermo, 2nd April, 1787: "Der helle Mondschein lockte uns des Abends noch auf die Rhede und hielt nach der Rückkehr uns noch eine lange Zeit auf dem Altan. Die Beleuchtung war sonderbar, Ruhe und Anmuth groß" (WA.I.31.88).
- 23) "Ich bestieg bei hellem Mondschein eine Gondel, lies den einen Sänger vorne, den andern hinten hintreten, und fuhr gegen St. Giorgio zu ... Die stillen Canäle, die hohen Gebäude, der Glanz des Mondes, die tiefen Schatten, das Geistermäßige der wenigen hin und wider wandernden schwarzen Gondeln vermehrte das Eigenthümliche dieser Scene, und es war leicht unter allen diesen Umständen den Charakter dieses wunderbaren Gesangs zu erkennen" (WA.I.32.345-7).
- 24) Cf. WA.I.32.338:  
  
Cum subit illius tristissima noctis imago,  
Quae mihi supremum tempus in Urbe fuit;  
Cum repeto noctem, qua tot mihi cara reliqui;  
Labitur ex oculis nunc quoque gutta meis.  
Iamque quiescebant voces hominumque canumque;  
Lunaque nocturnos alta regebat equos.  
Hanc ego suspiciens, et ab hac Capitolia cernens,  
Quae nostro frustra juncta fuere Lari.
- 25) Cf. below, pp. 237f., 313 and passim.
- 26) Cf. above, p. 94f.; L.A. Willoughby sees the evocation in this passage as that of "Goethe's own beloved dead, silver wraiths in the light of the moon", and associates it with the evocation of Ossianic spirits by moonlight in Werther (Goethe's Urfaust, ed. Willoughby, pp. 238 and 287).
- 27) Both G.W. Hertz (Natur und Geist in Goethes Faust, Frankfurt, 1931, p. 114f.) and Willy Moog ("Das Naturgefühl in Goethes Faust", Euphorion, 18, 1911.



p. 415ff.) see this passage in the light of the more conscious feeling for nature developed immediately before and during the Italienische Reise, as does Kuno Fischer: "Bei diesen Worten ist nicht an Ossian, sondern an Goethe, den Dichter der Iphigenie zu denken ... zu allen Gaben des Erdgeistes kommt noch die Kunst, Italien, Rom und das Altertum" (Goethes Faust, Heidelberg, 1912-13, Vol.3, p. 239).

- 28) The Ossianic association is clearer in Mephisto's sarcastic parody of the setting:

Was hast du da in Höhlen, Felsenritzen  
Dich wie ein Schuhu zu versitzen?  
Was schlürfst aus dumpfen Moos und triefendem  
Gestein  
Wie eine Kröte Nahrung ein?

(vv. 3271-4).

- 29) Cf. Römische Elegie XIII.
- 30) F. Strich, Goethes Faust, Bern und München, 1964, p. 56.
- 31) Cf. below, p. 281ff.
- 32) Cf. below, p. 293 and 346ff.
- 33) Cf. Fennel, Corpus der Goethezeichnungen, Vol.2, Abb. 22.
- 34) Cf. below, p. 220ff.
- 35) And years later he notes the same phenomenon in the landscape in a diary entry for 19th May, 1818: "Schöne Mondnacht. Bedeutende Licht- und Schattenmassen" (WA.III.6.211).
- 36) Cf. Fennel, Vol.2, p. 18, who quotes Alfred Hirth (Goethe als Zeichner, (Ungedruckte Habilitationsschrift), Jena, 1946) with reference to Abb. 27, drawn in November 1786: "Goethe hat in den ersten Monaten Italien vorwiegend ... vom Stimmungsmässigen her erlebt ... Auch später hat Goethe noch gerne Mondscheine gezeichnet, aber in diesen weichen, unwirklichen und unentschiedenen Stimmungen kehren sie nicht wieder ... Sie sind der Ausklang einer sich beschließenden Epoche." Cf. also Staiger:



"Im Zeichnen übt und kräftigt sich der Sinn für gegenständliche Darstellung, für reinliche Konturen, der in den Werken der neunziger Jahre sein Licht über alle Dinge verbreitet" (Goethe, Vol.2, p. 42). Goethe also notes in a Paralipomenon to the Italienische Reise: "[Antonio] Zuccis Methode Architectur in der Dämmerung zu sehen und sich besonders die Silhouetten zu merken die sie am Himmel macht" (WA. I.32.441).

In this connexion it is interesting to see that two of the painters with whom Goethe associated most closely in Italy, Wilhelm Tischbein and Friedrich Rehberg, were also interested in the effects of moonlight on landscape and architecture, and that this interest may be attributed to the common influence of the 17th century landscape painters, notably Elsheimer. Tischbein writes to Goethe on 10th July, 1787: "Ich ging zwischen den hohen Felsen und dem Meer spazieren, und erblickte den größten Effect: der dunkle Fels vom Mond glänzend erleuchtet, der eine lebhaft flimmernde Säule in das blaue Meer warf, und bis auf die am Ufer schwankenden Wellen herauf-flimmerte ... deutlich beleuchtet waren die Gruppen der Olivenbäume, Palmen und Pinien bei Fondi; aber die Vorzüge der Zitronenwälder vermiste man, sie stehen nur in ihrer ganzen Pracht, wenn die Sonne auf die goldglänzenden Früchte scheint" (WA.I.32.14-15).

And Rehberg writes to Goethe from Rome on 15th July, 1788: "... Neulich aßen wir Feigen auf der Kaiser Villa, im Angesicht der keuschen Luna, fanden hernach Feuer- und Mondeffekte im Coliseo, just so wie ihn die Landschaftsmaler haben wollen." There is little doubt that two of the landscape painters referred to are Claude Lorrain and Elsheimer, whose landscapes frequently included nocturnal scenes which featured the juxtaposition of artificial light (fires, torches, etc.) with the natural light of the moon. Cf. Kurt Gerstenberg, "Goethe und die italienische Landschaft", DVLG, 1 (1923), pp. 645-6, and Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art, London, 1949, pp. 51-2, on the influence of Elsheimer's nocturnal landscapes.

Years later, in a letter to Therese Eisl, Goethe himself remarks on Elsheimer's use of moonlight and firelight: "... der Mond, recht geeignet, die vom Wind getriebenen Wolken sichtbar zu machen, irgendwo ein vertrauliches Feuer am fernsten Ufer, wodurch Elzheimer seine tiefsten Nächte klar zu



machen wußte ..." (4th June, 1828; WA.IV.44.116-7). Cf. also Goethe's own drawing, Feuer im Walde (Femmel, Vol.1, Abb. 153).

- 37) Cf. WA.I.32.84: "Abends werden die Villen im Mondschein besucht, und sogar im Dunkeln die frappantesten Motive nachgezeichnet" (Frascati, 28th September, 1787). Femmel notes, however, "Aus diesem Zeitraum sind jedoch keine Zeichnungen mit entsprechendem Motivbestand zu finden" (Vol.2, p. 19), and dates all the drawings from Frascati in November 1786; cf. figs. 6 and 7.
- 38) G. Wietek, Untersuchungen zu Goethes Verhältnis zur Architektur, Diss., Kiel, 1951, p. 46. Cf. Femmel, Vol.3, Abb. 4, Villenterrasse im Mondschein; Abb. 5, ibid; Abb. 6, Villa im Mondschein; Abb. 8, ibid; and Abb. 10, Landgut bei Rom im Mondschein. Cf. also the drawings of the pyramid of Cestius by moonlight (Femmel, Vol.2, Abb. 331 and 332), to which Goethe refers in a letter to Fritz von Stein: "Du schriebsst neulich von einem Grab der MIB Gore bei Rom. Vor einigen Abenden, da ich traurige Gedanken hatte, zeichnete ich meines bei der Pyramide des Cestius ..." (16th February, 1788; WA.IV.8.352).
- 39) Cf. below, p. 325f.
- 40) Cf. WA.III.1.276 (7th October, 1786).
- 41) Cf. also Paralipomenon 16, which contains "Allerley Notanda während der 1. Reise in Italien". Among the jottings are various remarks on the reflection of light in water, and on the colours associated with it, which read like early observations for the Farbenlehre, and which indicate Goethe's intention to deal more closely with the phenomenon than he in fact did: "Der Widerschein der Sonne und des Mondes ist hinten breiter als vorn wenn sie in einer gewissen Höhe stehn. Der Widerschein der aufgehenden Sonne zeigt sich erst in der Nähe des Beobachters und geht nach hinten zu, ist erst röthlich dann gelblich dann Silber ... Hierauf eine sehr feine graue Tuschzeichnung, welche das eben erwähnte Phänomen des nach hinten sich verbreitenden Widerscheins des Mondes im Wasser darstellt" (WA.I. 31.333). The drawing, very vague, is reproduced in Femmel, Vol.2, Abb. 132.



- 42) Cf. Fennel, Vol.2, Abb. 38, Kegelberg mit Wolkenkranz am Wasser; Abb. 39, Segelboot auf dem Fluß; Abb. 282, Italienische Küstenlandschaft bei Vollmond; Abb. 283, Mondscheinszenerie; and Abb. 286, Meeresbucht mit Kastell; cf. figs. 8 and 9.
- 43) Fennel, ibid., Abb. 282 (fig. 9) and 283; cf. also ibid., p. 95.
- 44) Cf. above, fn. 36.
- 45) Cf. Fennel, Vol.2, Abb. 38, Kegelberg mit Wolkenkranz (fig. 8).
- 46) Peter Schmidt also points out this tendency during the Italienische Reise: "Immer wieder werden ja die Naturbeschreibungen auf ihre Malbarkeit geprüft, immer wieder sieht Goethe die Landschaft mit den Augen eines Malers." (Goethes Farbensymbolik, p. 45).
- 47) The use of the image in Der Groß-Coshta, one of Goethe's occasional works reflecting the "Geschmack des Augenblicks ... in denen sich kaum die leiseste Spur von seinem Genius findet" (Staiger, Goethe, Vol.2, p. 90), is the last occurrence of the lightly sardonic use of the conventional associations of the moon and moonlight of Empfindsamkeit.
- 48) Apart from the images dealt with immediately above from the Römische Elegien, Hermann und Dorothea, Alexis und Dora, Reineke Fuchs, and the image as it occurs in the Walpurgisnacht and in the ballads Hochzeittlied and Der Totentanz (cf. above, p. 162ff.), the moon features only incidentally in Die natürliche Tochter, in some of the Xenien, in the Epilog zu Schillers Glocke and in some minor Maskenzüge and Prologues.
- 49) Cf. Eckermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 3, p. 161 (11th March, 1828). Cf. also Peter Schmidt, op. cit., p. 14, who also points out the problem of tracing a clear consistency in Goethe's use of motifs and images: "Jede historische Untersuchung eines Goetheschen Problemkreises sieht sich vor eine grundsätzliche Schwierigkeit gestellt, die Goethe selbst in einer Anzeige seiner Schriften aus dem Jahre 1816 folgendermaßen formuliert hat:



'... Die Goetheschen Arbeiten hingegen sind Erzeugnisse eines Talents, das sich nicht stufenweis entwickelt und auch nicht umherschwärzt, sondern gleichzeitig aus einem gewissen Mittelpunkt sich nach allen Seiten hin versucht und in der Nähe sowohl als in der Ferne zu wirken strebt, manchen eingeschlagenen Weg für immer verläßt, auf andere lange beharrt' (WA.I.41.1.97).

... Motive und Beziehungen, die sich in frühester Zeit herausgebildet haben, können sich durch das ganze Werk ziehen, andere sind für lange Jahre vergessen und finden sich erst später wieder, wieder andere werden nur einmal erwähnt und verschwinden dann für immer."

- 50) Staiger, Goethe. Vol.3. pp. 15-16.
- 51) Cf. Staiger, ibid., p. 16: "Jetzt [1814], da sich Goethe endlich -- nicht unsicher, wie nach Schillers Tod, sondern mit einem kräftigen Ruck -- von dem Gedanken der Vorbildlichkeit und von dem Gefühl, das Ewig-Wahre der Welt demonstrieren zu müssen, löste, nun kümmerten ihn die Regel nicht mehr ... Formale Vollendung, Gleichgewicht von Selbstständigkeit und Beziehung der Teile, Verhältnis von Stoff, Gehalt und Form, Einheit und Mannigfaltigkeit, vollkommene Schaubarkeit des Ganzen ... sie fielen dahin ..."
- 52) Cf. S.S. Praver, German Lyric Poetry, p. 74: "The Seventh Elegy constitutes a paen to an entirely happy present: a present on which shines the light of the Roman sun illuminating forms and calling forth colours. Even the night, Sternhell, fails to obscure these forms ...":
- O wie fühl ich in Rom mich so froh! gedenk ich der Zeiten,  
Da mich ein graulicher Tag hinten im Norden umfing,  
Trübe der Himmel und schwer auf meine Scheitel sich senkte,  
Farb- und gestaltlos die Welt um den Ermatteten lag.  
Und ich über mein Ich, des unbefriedigten Geistes  
Düstre Wege zu spähn, still in Betrachtung versank.  
Nun unleuchtet der Glanz des helleren Äthers die Stirne;  
Phöbus ruft, der Gott, Formen und Farben hervor.  
Sternhell glänzet die Nacht, sie klingt von weichen Gesängen,  
Und mir leuchtet der Mond heller als nordischer Tag.



- 53) The image of the sun had already had considerable significance as a symbol of clarity and truth in the early Weimar poetry; cf. Ilmenau:

Die Wolke flieht, der Nebel fällt,  
Die Schatten sind hinweg. Ihr Götter,  
Freis und Wonne!  
Es leuchtet mir die wahre Sonne!

and Zueignung:

Auf einmal schien die Sonne durchzudringen,  
Im Nebel ließ sich eine Klarheit sehn ...

- 54) Thorau (Anschauung und Darstellung der Sonne), intent on proving the pre-eminence of the image of the sun over that of the moon in Goethe's works, takes any metaphor as grist to his mill, regardless of its context. Thus, dealing with the image of the moon by day in Tasso III, 3, he claims: "Obwohl auch der Mond in Italien auf Goethe einen größeren Eindruck macht als in Deutschland, muß er, der Herrscher der Nacht, jetzt doch vor der gewaltigeren Sonne verblassen" (p. 78). And with reference to the later lyrics: "Goethe ... Überwindet mit seinem ihm eingeborenen Trieb nach Wahrheit und Klarheit das Schönheitsideal der Dämmerung mit zunehmendem Alter immer mehr und mehr und gibt auf der Höhe der Weisheit gelangt der Sonne den Vorzug vor dem Monde und den anderen Gestirnen" (p. 196).

We are not concerned here with assessing the relative importance or "superiority" of the two images in Goethe's works, either in quality or quantity, but with assessing the metaphorical value and significance of the image of the moon both in its immediate context and in that of the work as a whole. There is no reason to assume, when Goethe expresses the superiority of the sun over the moon (or vice-versa) in a certain context in order to give metaphorical expression to a certain idea or situation, that this is true of the images of sun and moon in general.

- 55) Cf. Fennel, Vol.5, Abb. 7.
- 56) Goethe seems to have been attracted to the original poem more by Zelter's musical setting than by Friederike Brun's talent -- cf. the letter of 13th June, 1796 to Friederike Unger: "Die trefflichen



Compositionen des Herrn Zelter haben mich in einer Gesellschaft angetroffen, die mich zuerst mit seinen Arbeiten bekannt machte. Seine Melodie des Liedes: ich danke dein hatte einen unglaublichen Reitz für mich und ich konnte nicht unterlassen selbst das Lied dazu zu dichten, das in dem Schiller'schen Musenalmanach steht."

- 57) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.1, pp. 354-5: "Aus Zweifel, beklommener Stimmung, träumerisch-tastendem Sinnen und Fragen steigen die ewigen Gedanken auf und beleuchten das weite Feld des Schicksals mit ihrem ruhigen silbernen Licht, nicht anders als im Lied An den Mond die Seligpreisung der letzten Strophen, das "ruhest du auch" in Wanderers Nachtlied und noch viel später, im Bräutigam der alle Sorge lösende Vers, 'Wie es auch sei, das Leben, es ist gut'..."
- 58) H.A. Korff, Goethe im Bildwandel seiner Lyrik, Vol.2, p. 35.
- 59) Cf. Das Hohelied Salomos, WA.I.37.306ff., "Wie die Rose unter den Dornen, so ist mein Liebchen unter den Mädchen ... Wer ist, die hervorblüht wie die Morgenröthe? Lieblich wie der Mond, rein wie die Sonne, furchtbar wie Heerspitzen ... Die Lilien geben den Ruch, vor unsrer Tür sind allerlei Würze, heurige, fernige. Meine Liebe bewahrt' ich dir!"
- 60) Cf. Erich Heller, "Goethe and the Idea of Scientific Truth", in: Heller, The Disinherited Mind, Cambridge, 1952, pp. 28-9.
- 61) Cf. the diary entries for 23rd and 27th August, 1799; 6th and 18th September, 1799; 12th February and 26th October, 1800; 17th and 18th September, 1801 etc.
- 62) Cf. JA.39.81: "Der Mensch an sich selbst, insofern er sich seiner gesunden Sinne bedient, ist der größte und genaueste physikalische Apparat, den es geben kann; und das ist eben das größte Unheil der modernen Physik, daß man die Experimente gleichsam vom Menschen abgesondert hat und bloß in dem, was künstliche Instrumente zeigen, die Natur erkennen, ja, was sie leisten kann, dadurch beschränken und beweisen will."



- 63) Cf. for example, the introduction to the didactic section of the Farbenlehre, where Goethe uses a lunar analogy to describe Newton's whole method of approach, comparing him with an astronomer "der aus Grille den Mond in die Mitte unseres Systems setzen möchte. Er wäre genöthigt, die Erde, die Sonne mit allen übrigen Planeten um den subalternen Körper herum zu bewegen, und durch künstliche Berechnungen und Verstellungsweisen das Irrige seines ersten Annahmens zu verstecken und zu beschönigen" (WA.II.1.xrx).
- 64) Cf. the diary entries for 26th October and 17th September, 1801, and the letter to Schiller of 11th February, 1800:  
 "... Um 7 Uhr, da der Mond aufgeht, sind Sie zu einer astronomischen Partie eingeladen, den Mond und den Saturn zu betrachten, denn es finden sich heute Abend drey Teleskope in meinem Hause. Sollten Sie aber die warme Stube vorziehen, so wird Ihnen Freund Meyer Gesellschaft leisten, der die Mondsberge so sehr wie die Schweizerberge, und die Gestirne so sehr als die Kälte mit einem herzlichen Künstlerhaß verfolgt ..." (WA.IV.15.25).
- 65) Cf. Physiologische Farben, 87: "Es gibt schwach wirkende Lichter, welche demungeachtet eine weisse, höchstens hellgelbliche Erscheinung auf der Retina machen, wie der Mond in seiner vollen Klarheit ..." (WA.II.1.41).
- 66) Sinnlich-sittliche Wirkung der Farbe. JA.40.89.
- 67) "Die Luftfahrer, besonders Zanbaccari und seine Gefährten, wollen in ihrer höchsten Erhebung den Mond blutroth gesehen haben. Da sie sich über die irdischen Dünste emporgeschwunden hatten, durch welche wir den Mond und die Sonne wohl in einer solchen Farbe sehen, so läßt sich vermuthen, daß diese Erscheinung zu den pathologischen Farben gehöre. Es mögen nämlich die Sinne durch den ungewohnten Zustand dergestalt afficirt sein, daß der ganze Körper und besonders auch die Retina in eine Art von Unrührbarkeit und Unreizbarkeit verfällt. Es ist daher nicht unmöglich, daß der Mond als ein höchst abgestumpftes Licht wirke und also das Gefühl der rothen Farbe (!) hervorbringe ..." (Pathologische Farben, WA.II.1.53-4).



- 68) Cf. above, p. 162.
- 69) Cf. WA.II.4.228: "Farbige Schatten, hervorgebracht durch den Mondenschein und ein künstliches Licht. Dieses ist ohne Frage die schönste und eminenteste von allen Erfahrungen."
- 70) Cf. Italienische Reise. Neapel den 2. Juni 1787: "... Meine Wirthin, so will ich sie nennen, weil mir nicht leicht ein köstlicheres Abendmahl zubereitet war, ließ die Kerzen an die Gegenseite des Zimmers stellen, und die schöne Frau, vom Monde beleuchtet, als Vordergrund dieses unglaublichen Bildes, schien mir immer schöner zu werden ..." (WA.I.31.275).
- 71) Cf. Richard Friedenthal, Goethe, his life and times. London, 1963, p. 443.
- 72) WA.II.1.36; cf. also II.5.1.107 and 117.
- 73) In a relatively unimportant passage in the Farbenlehre Goethe touches on the alchemical symbolism of the planets and metals, and the colours associated with them: "...Die Rothe Farbe gehört dem Marti und dem röthlichen Eisen ..., die Gelbe dem Soli und dem gelbscheinenden Golde; ... die Weiße der Lunae und dem weißen Silber..." (WA.II.5.1.400); but there is little evidence for assuming any connexion between this passage and the Astrolog's speech in the Mummenschauz beyond their common alchemical sources:

Ja, wenn zu Sol sich Luna fein gesellt,  
Zum Silber Gold, dann ist es heitre Welt ...  
(vv. 4965-6).

In this connexion cf. also above, fn. 6. The origin of this alchemical symbolism is the theory "that gold is formed from sunlight trapped by flowers and changed into nectar, which is turned into honey by bees, then into sulphur by contact with the earth, which under pressure gives gold; while silver is formed from moonlight trapped in dewdrops (cf. above, p. 98ff.), then changed into quicksilver by contact with earth, which pressure solidifies into true silver." (John Wren-Lewis, in an article on John Dalton, "The forgotten Centenary", The Guardian, 8th November, 1966; my italics).



In his recent book on Goethe's colour-symbolism, Peter Schmidt gives the gold and silver symbolism in Goethe's works a wider reference. In a variant version of the masquerade Der Aufzug der vier Weltalter of 1782, the allegories representing the Golden and Silver Ages are adorned with the sun and moon respectively; cf. WA.I.16.440.

#### Das goldne Alter

Weiß und Gold, simpel im griechischen Geschmack. Sonne auf dem Haupte ...

#### Das silberne

Blau mit Silber, mannichfaltigere Tracht, zum Hauptschmuck einen silbernen Mond ...

Schmidt remarks: "Sonne und Mond sind ja denn auch Zeichen der beiden Weltalter. Damit werden sie aber auch zugleich als Tag und Nacht charakterisiert, womit auch Weiß (das helle Tageslicht) und Blau (die dunkle Mondnacht) übereinstimmen. Daneben bezeichnet Weiß natürlich auch noch die Reinheit und Unschuld der Goldenen Zeit. Indem das Silberne Weltalter aber zugleich den Mond zum Zeichen und die Gaben des Geistes und der geselligen Fröhlichkeit zum Begleiter hat [cf. WA.I.16.195], wird die Kunst der Nacht, die Natur dem Tage zugeordnet" (Goethes Farbensymbolik, p. 37).

These examples are, however, among the few specific occasions on which Goethe makes conscious use of the traditional (or alchemical) association of the sun with gold and the moon with silver (the association found in An Luna: "Nebel schwimmt mit Silberschauer / Um dein reizendes Gesicht", and of the Wald und Höhle lines: "Der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten" seem to be based more on visual effects than on traditional symbolism). Schmidt, however, sees a very much wider and deeper association in some of Goethe's moon-and-silver symbolism; speaking generally of the associations of gold and silver, he points out: "Gold bezeichnet so das Leben, die Sonne, den Tag, die männlichen Kräfte, Silber dagegen einen Bereich über und außerhalb des Lebens, des Mondes, der Nacht, der weiblichen Zartheit. Den erotischen Genußgier des Goldes stehen Keuschheit und Reinheit des Silbers gegenüber. Absolute Reinheit ist mit dem Entzug von Farbe und Leben verbunden, die pure Durchsichtigkeit und Körperlosig-



keit ist endlich der letzte Grad dieser Klarheit und Reinheit" (p. 244) -- this in spite of the fact that in the Aufzug der vier Weltalter it is the Golden Age, and the sun that are associated with purity and innocence. Schmidt then goes on to associate silver with moonlight with reference to these symbolic associations, citing An Luna, An den Mond and the moon-passages from the first part of Faust, and claims: "Das Silber bezeichnet fast immer diese unwirkliche Sphäre, es findet sich immer verbunden mit dem Körperlosen, kaum Sichtbaren, mit dem Durchsichtigen, dem Reinen und Hellen" (ibid., p. 246).

I would certainly agree that these elements are very closely associated with the moon and moonlight in Goethe's works, from the early lyrics right through even the Italienische Reise, the novels and the late lyrics to the Klassische Walpurgisnacht; but to associate these elements in turn with silver, by virtue of the traditional association of silver with moonlight, is perhaps a little exaggerated in Goethe's case, since he only rarely or incidentally associates moonlight explicitly with the element of silver.

74) Cf. below, p. 329ff.

75) The moon is a much more frequent motif in the later Wanderjahre than in the Lehrjahre; and moreover the moon-images of the Wanderjahre itself are late additions to the novel. Emil Krüger points out "das bis zum Beginn der Bearbeitung der letzten Fassung, also bis 1825, nur einmal der Mond erwähnt wird ... In der letzten Fassung aber wird der Mond das Gestirn, das die Szenen in entsprechender Weise beleuchten und die Stimmung der Handelnden hervortreten lassen muß". (Die Novellen in Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahren, Diss., Kiel, 1926, p. 61). Krüger's explanation, not very fully or satisfactorily formulated, is that "diese Vorliebe für die Mondlandschaften in der letzten Fassung zweifellos romantischen Einflüssen zuzuschreiben ist".

76) Andreas Müller, Landschaftserlebnis und Landschaftsbild, Stuttgart, 1955, p. 118.

77) Cf. WA.I.22.220; 25,1.49 and 116-7.



- 78) In a letter to Auguste von Stolberg, 24th May, 1776: "Es war ein grosser Anblick ich stand auf einem Hause wo das Dach herunter war und wo unsere Schlauchspritze nur das untere noch erhalten sollte, und sich Gustgen und hinter und vor und neben mir feine Glut, nicht Flamme, tiefe hohläugige Glut des niedergesunkenen Orts, und der Wind drein und dann wieder da eine auffahrende Flamme, und die herrlichen alten Bäume um's Ort inwendig in ihren hohlen Stämmen glühend und der rothe Dampf in der Nacht und die Sterne roth und der neue Mond sich verbergend in Wolken ... (WA.IV.3.69).
- 79) WA.I.23.276; cf. above, Chapter 2, fn. 48 (p. 53)
- 80) WA.I.25.1.69; cf. above, p. 64.
- 81) Cf. above, p. 74.
- 82) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 49.
- 83) Cf. WA.I.25.1.280-1 and 283-4.
- 84) WA.I.24.323 and 328. All quotations from Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren cited below are taken from WA.I.24.328ff.
- 85) Goethe describes his enthusiasm for skating in Dichtung und Wahrheit, acknowledging his debt to Klopstock for his introduction to the sport. He gives the following account of skating by night, which, in spite of its "Ossianic" mood, holds something of the atmosphere of the scene from the Novelle:
- "Einen herrlichen Sonnentag so auf dem Eise zu verbringen, genügte uns nicht; wir setzten unsere Bewegung bis spät in die Nacht fort. Denn wie andere Anstrengungen den Leib ermüden, so verleiht ihm diese eine immer neue Schwungkraft. Der über den nächtlichen, weiten, zu Eisfeldern überfrorenen Wiesen aus den Wolken hervortretende Vollmond, die unserm Lauf entgegensäuselnde Nachtluft, des bei abnehmendem Wasser sich senkenden Eises ernsthafter Donner, unserer eigenen Bewegungen sonderbarer Nachhall, vergegenwärtigten uns Ossianische Scenen ganz vollkommen" (WA.I.28.122).
- There is also a drawing from the early Weimar years, about 1777/78, which shows the frozen Schwansee by moonlight, with figures, presumably skaters, on



on the ice (Femmel, Vol.1, Abb. 193; of. fig. 10).

- 86) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 151.
- 87) Richard Beitzl suggests, reasonably enough, that the appearance of the moon represents an element of confusion in the action of the novel, or uncertainty on the part of the characters, but he makes the rather dubious distinction between the rôles of sun and moon, that whereas the sun accompanies the demands of fate on the characters, the moon accompanies its course and fulfilment (Das Bild der Landschaft, p. 123).
- 88) Hans Schulz, Anschauung und Darstellung des Mondes, p. 88, with reference to the passage: "Was mußten nicht hier die verschiedenen Tageszeiten, was Mond und Sonne für Wirkungen hervorbringen!" (WA.I.20. 314). Schulz's claim is promptly disputed by Franz Thorau, who finds himself able to agree with Schulz "nur insofern ... als damit nicht eine Überschätzung der Stellung und Bedeutung des Mondes im Verhältnis zur Sonne zum Ausdruck gebracht ist" (Anschauung und Darstellung der Sonne, p. 114).
- 89) In his recent study of Die Wahlverwandtschaften, H.G. Barnes points out the significance of much of the landscape description in the novel, it "usually has a hidden symbolical significance ... The narrator's landscape descriptions are functions of the action." But Dr. Barnes also shows, with reference to the passage quoted above from Chapter 15 of the first part, that the characters do not respond to nature in anything like the same way as in Werther: "The description is again functional, serving the narrator's characterisation of the hero. Nature seems of no effect when confronted with the force of Eduard's passion for Ottilie. Thus the tranquillising influence of the moon (a common topos in eighteenth-century German poetry, as a number of Goethe's lyrics show) is quite inoperative here ..." (Goethe's Die Wahlverwandtschaften, Oxford, 1967, pp. 8-10).
- 90) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.2, p. 517; cf. Goethe's remark to Schiller quoted above, p. 221: "Es war eine Zeit, wo man den Mond nur empfinden wollte, jetzt will man ihn sehen."







- 6) With the single exception of the description of paradise in Es ist gut:

Bei Mondenschein im Paradies  
Fand Jehovah im Schlafe tief  
Adam versunken ...

(Buch der Parabeln)

- 7) Pace Professor Earloh (cf. above, p. 16f. and passim).
- 8) Thus H. Baumgart, Goethes Lyrische Dichtung, Vol.3, p. 55.
- 9) Thus Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 47: "Auf einen Abglanz jugendlichen Dichtens und Liebens war er gefast. Nun kehrt die Jugend selber zurück mit aller Fülle...."
- 10) Cf. above, pp. 157ff., 177ff., and 202ff.
- 11) Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 47. The titles of some of the poems themselves indicate the theme: Abglanz, Nachklang, and the image of the rainbow in Hochbild. Burdach expresses the whole East-West character of the Divan in similar terms: "Dieser Divan ist weder rein morgenländisch noch rein abendländisch: er soll an beiden Teil haben und zwischen, über beiden Welten schweben. Er soll wirken wie ein entoptisches Bild und es ist kein Zufall, das gerade während seiner Entstehung, Goethe so eifrig mit physikalischen, chromatischen und entoptischen Untersuchungen und Experimenten sich beschäftigt hat" (Burdach, Vorspiel, Vol.2, p. 299; cf. also p. 318).
- 12) Cf. Burdach, ibid., pp. 308 and 417-9, and Max Hecker, Goethes Briefwechsel mit Marianne von Willemer, Leipzig, 1922, p. 113. The amulet with the Turkish insignia of sun and crescent moon recurs in the poem Abglanz, where it is associated with the theme of Spiegelung:

Ein Spiegel ist er mir geworden,  
Ich sehe so gerne hinein,  
Als hinge des Kaisers Orden  
An mir mit Doppelschein.

(Buch Suleika)

-- almost ten years later Goethe refers to the amulet



in a letter to Marianne: "...Auch schmückt der  
Sonnemond noch heute mein Schatzkästchen..."  
(WA.IV.38.138).

- 13) Cf. Selections from Hafiz, p. 147:

Hafiz! why dost thou complain about the grief  
of separation?  
In separation there is union -- and in darkness,  
light.  
(Ode 281).

and:

Be patient, O my heart! grieve not; for in the  
end  
Evening becometh morning; and after Night,  
Dawn cometh!  
(Ode 147)

-- of. also the poem Nachklang (below, p

- 14) It is difficult to agree with Burdach when he  
describes the use of the images of sun and crescent  
moon here as "ein tiefes Symbol" (op. cit., Vol.2,  
p. 308), and remarks that only "der unvorbereitete  
Leser hier nur eine spielende Huldigung, eine  
orientalisierende Liebeshyperbel bemerkt" (p. 417).

- 15) Cf. Selections from Hafiz, p. 55:

The face of my beloved is a Moon which  
glows  
With all the splendour that the Sun on her  
bestows!  
(Ode 367).

p.57: Equerry to thy moon-like face is Dawn arrayed!  
(Ibid.)

and p. 54 (translator's note): "A mistress's face  
is often termed a moon, or is compared to the  
moon ... the lines and shadings on the face are  
sometimes compared to the markings on the moon."  
The comparison of a man's or woman's face with  
the moon, or of eyebrows with the crescent moon,  
is one of Hafiz's most common similes -- of.  
further The Divan-I-Hafiz, translated by H. Wilber-  
force-Clarke, Calcutta, 1891, Vol.1, pp. 44, 50,  
62, 107, 112, 119, 213, 216, 289, 439, 458, etc.



The expression "Mondgesicht" had, however, already been used by Goethe in a curious Paralipomenon from the end of the 1790's:

Nachtgespenster sehen nicht mehr die garstigen  
 langen;  
 Neumond kündest du an! Almanac, redest du Wahr?  
 Leuchtet mir doch das Gemach von holdem mond-  
 lichen Schimmer  
 Wohl das Mondengesicht, senekte vom Himmel sich  
 her.  
 (WA.I.5,11.374)

-- and the same expression reappears in the Mummen-  
 schanz of Faust II. here with Eastern reference,  
 to describe the appearance of Faust/Plutus:

Das Würdige beschreibt sich nicht;  
 Doch das gesunde Mondgesicht,  
 Ein voller Mund, erblühte Wangen,  
 Die unter'm Schmuck des Turbans prangen;  
 Im Faltenkleid ein reich Behagen!  
 Was soll ich von dem Anstand sagen?  
 Als Herrscher scheint er mir bekannt.  
 (vv. 5562-68)

Erich Trunz notes here: "Das Bild des Reichtums hat -- wohl von dem Reichtum östlicher Herrscher her -- leicht orientalisierende Züge -- ein kleiner Anklang von Divan-Sprache in Faust-Drama" (HA.3.541).

- 16) Cf. The Divan-I-Hafiz, Vol.1, p. 139:

From the city, my moon went this week; to my eye  
 a year it is:  
 The state of separation what knowest thou how  
 difficult the state is?  
 (Ode 53).

- 17) Cf. above, pp. 118ff. and 134ff.

- 18) Cf. the letters to Christiane von Goethe from Frankfurt on 29th July, 1814 and from Heidelberg on 27th and 29th September and 6th October, 1814 (WA.IV.25.5, 43, 47 and 49).

- 19) Cf. above, p. 204f.



- 20) Karl Viëtor suggests, speculatively and on the grounds of the biographical evidence, that there is a conscious relation between the two moon-lyrics: "Das Divangedicht ... hat nichts von Symbolik und allwaltenden Mächten. Aber das Dornburger Mondlied ist wie eine aus der Sphäre des denkenden Anschauens kommende Antwort des Mannes, eine späte Antwort, wie jetzt die Seligkeit der Nacht ihm das Gefühl wieder gegenwärtig macht" ("Goethes Altersgedichte", Euphorion 33, 1932, p. 133).

- 21) With the variant in l.11:

Schlägt mein Herz auch schneller, schneller ...

-- a change presumably due more to personal than to artistic considerations.

- 22) Goethe returns to this idea in two further letters to the Willemsers; that of 12th January, 1829:

"Anstatt ein langes Verzeichnis aller Hindernisse zu geben, die sich einem schriftlichen Besuch bey meinen theueren Freunden in den Weg stellen, versichere lieber, daß ich, wie früher den Mond, eben so auch die Sterne, nicht weniger die Sonne zum Zeugen anrufen könnte, daß meine Gedanken immer dort sind, wohin sie lange gewidmet waren" (WA.IV.45.119); and of 10th July, 1830:

"Eine schöne Mondennacht am Rhein gönne ich Ihnen von Herzen und theile die Empfindung als gegenwärtig ..." (WA.IV.47.144).

- 23) Max Hecker, Goethes Briefwechsel mit Marianne von Willemer, Leipzig, 1922, pp. 168-9 (2nd November, 1828).

- 24) Hammer-Purgstall's translation, quoted by Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 48; or, in Wilberforce-Clarke's more tortuous version:

Last night, in the midst of the trees, I beheld  
the beloved's face,  
As a form, that the cloud, moon-encircling, becometh.  
(To the beloved) I spake, saying: "A beginning,  
I make with a kiss".  
(The Divan-I-Hafiz, Vol.1, p. 476).

- 25) Cf. Burdach, Vorspiel, Vol.2, p. 317: "Stimmung



und Kolorit des zauberischen Gedichts sind wie in den schwülen Duft morgenländischer Sommernächte getaucht und orientalische Liebesleidenschaft scheint darin ekstatisch zu stammeln."

- 26) Goethe, Vol.3, p. 49: "In Goethes ganzem Schaffen stehen diese Zeilen einzig da. Als er jung war, hatte die deutsche Sprache noch nicht die Schmiegsamkeit, sich solchen Aufforderungen zu fügen. Und später versagte er sich das unmittelbare lyrische Bekenntnis höchster Liebestrunkenheit." Staiger compares the mood of the second stanza with that of the farewell scene by moonlight by Lake Maggiore in the Wanderjahre (cf. above, p. 233f.): "Die dort wie hier 'ausschließlich und lyrisch anerkannte' Szene löst sich in ein magisches Flimmern auf." This parallel holds true, however, only in the most general terms; perhaps the nearest Goethe ever came in his lyric poetry to the expression and suggestion of the second stanza of Vollmondnacht was in the vowel sounds of Herbstgefühl, or in the opening lines of Mignon's song:

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen,  
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühen ...

- 27) Viëtor, "Goethes Altersgedichte", Euphorion, 33, p. 133.

- 28) Cf. vv. 4642-3:

Nacht ist schon hereingesunken,  
Schließt sich heilig Stern an Stern ...

- 29) Cf. Viëtor, op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 106: "Es könnte ... erscheinen, als sei der ins Patriarchenalter eintretende Dichter nach der wiederholten Pubertät der Divan-Jahre nun aus dem Bereich des schöpferischen Austausches mit der sinnlichen Natur übergetreten in den des Geistes ... Die letzten Naturgedichte zeigen, daß es nicht so ist." Erich Trunz similarly points out that among all the Gelegenheitsgedichte, Sprüche, Betrachtungen, etc., of the years 1816-1832, there are two genres of poetry which stand out clearly: the Gedanken-lyrik and the pure nature lyrics; "Die [reine] Lyrik aber bleibt das eigentliche Wunder" (E. Trunz, "Goethes späte Lyrik", DVLG, 23, 1949, p. 409).



- 30) Eokermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 1, pp. 197-8.
- 31) Cf. the diary entry for 13th February, 1818 (WA.III.6.171).
- 32) Cf. WA.I.36.137: "Ein wundersamer Zustand bei hehrem Mondenschein brachte mir das Lied Um Mitternacht, welches mir desto lieber und werther ist, da ich nicht sagen könnte, woher es kam und wohin es wollte."
- 33) Cf. Viëtor, op. cit., Euphorion, 33, pp. 151-2: "Es fällt auf, welche Übermacht in diesen letzten Gedichten die Lichtseite der Natur hat ... Wo die Gedichte Vorgänge darstellen, zeigen sie immer wieder das eine Schauspiel, wie das Licht triumphierend, siegend, kräftigend und erlösend hervortritt. Lauter Gedichte des obsiegenden Lichts sind es, und sind damit lauter Ausdruck der Lebensgläubigkeit des alten Dichters ... Goethe weiß als Wissenschaftler, daß die Nachtseite der Lichtwelt genau so notwendig, wichtig ist, wie die Lichtseite [Cf. WA.II.5.1.392] ... doch hält er sich als Dichter, wo er nicht die sachlich wägende Kühle des wissenschaftlichen Betrachters zu wahren hat, sondern wo er sich nach dem Drang seines Herzens und den Sehnsüchten seiner Seele entscheiden darf, an die Tagseite der Naturwirklichkeit: an die lebengebende Sonne, den seelenlösenden, befriedenden Schein des Mondes, an den zuversichtlichen 'Liebesblick der Sterne'. Licht ist Leben, Nacht ist Tod."
- 34) Cf. Korff, Goethe im Bildwandel seiner Lyrik, Vol.2, p. 336: "Das Erlebnis ist ... nicht die Vollmondnacht, in der Goethe das Gedicht empfangen hat, sondern der in Gedanken vollzogene Vergleich seiner Altersstimmung mit den nächtlichen Gefühlen, die er als Knabe und als Mann erlebt zu haben sich erinnert."
- 35) Cf. R.D. Gray, Poems of Goethe, p. 179; and Korff, op. cit., Vol.2, p. 335, who points out that even in the last stanza the darkness is not fully dispelled: "Es wird offenbar immer heller [in diesem Gedicht]. Die Dunkelheit löst sich auf, aber doch nicht so ganz, daß nicht an den Rändern



das Dunkel immer noch zurückbleibe." Cf. also Erich Trunz, op. cit., DVLG, 23, p. 411: "In drei Strophen, drei Mitternachtssituationen, gibt es drei Lebensalter. In jeder Stufe erscheint das Licht anders und reiner, geistiger."

- 36) Trunz still sees the images as only illogically related: "Ein Lebenslied, Überblick über das Leben als Ganzes, Zusammenschau der drei Stufen, sie stehen als Bilder da -- und als Bilder haben sie kein rationales Verhältnis, denn auch das Leben ist rätselhaft in seiner Folge." (HA.1.579).
- 37) R.D. Gray, Poems of Goethe, p. 179.
- 38) Cf. above, pp. 118ff. and 255ff.
- 39) Viëtor, op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 108.
- 40) E.M. Wilkinson, "Tasso -- ein geestiger Werther in the light of Goethe's principle of Steigerung", in: Goethe Poet and Thinker, pp. 185ff. Erich Trunz uses the term when discussing more generally the meaning of the last stanza: "... War der Knabe dumpf, unbewusst, der Mann von Leidenschaft gezogen, so waltet jetzt der Geist, willig, sinnig, schnelle -- auch ohne das Wort 'zuletzt' würde dadurch der Charakter des Alters deutlich sein -- und die Adjektive zeigen, wieviel Glück hiernit angedeutet ist: Alter ist nicht Abstieg, sondern Steigerung." (HA.1.579).
- 41) "Die Symbolik verwandelt die Erscheinung in Idee, die Idee in ein Bild, und so, das die Idee im Bild immer unendlich wirksam und unerreichbar bleibt ..." -- cf. above, p. 10.
- 42) Walter Hof, "Um Mitternacht. Goethe und Charlotte von Stein im Alter", Euphorion, 45, (1950), p. 64.
- 43) Cf. Ibid., p. 61: Goethe, having edited and published the letters and diaries of the Italienische Reise, (up to the end of his stay in Sicily), had burnt the originals. One letter, however, he writes to Zelter on 16th February, 1818, he could not burn: "Es ist ein so hübsches Wort auf dem Wendepunkt des ganzen Abentheuers, und gibt einen Dämmerchein rückwärts und vorwärts ..." (WA.IV.29.56). The letter is dated Palermo, 18. April 1787, and contains



the words: "Leb wohl Geliebteste mein Herz ist bey dir und jetzt da die Weite Ferne, die Abwesenheit alles gleichsam weggeläutert hat was die letzte Zeit über zwischen uns stockte so brennt und leuchtet die schöne Flamme der Liebe der Treue, des Andenkens wieder fröhlich in meinem Herzen" (WA.IV.8.212). Hof sees the letter to Zelter as echoing the thought of the poem written three days earlier: "Der Dämmerchein, den jenes Wort rückwärts und vorwärts wirft, und das stille Mondlicht, in dem der Gedanke sich ums Vergangne wie ums Künftige schlingt, sie sind doch wohl eins" (p. 63).

Hof goes on to support his association of the poem with Charlotte with the conjecture that after Christiane's death in 1816, and particularly after Charlotte's serious illness in the summer of 1817, "zwischen beiden einmal das schon so dünn gewordene Eis vollends durchbrochen worden sei" (p. 66), and hence "das Lida in jener Zeit [1818] für Goethe eine neue, nun aber versöhnte Wirklichkeit gewinnt, und das das Lebenslied als insgeheim dieser wiederversöhnten Lida zugesprochen gelten darf" (p. 65).

- 44) Cf. above, p. 114ff. and passim, and also the letter from Zimmermann to Lavater quoted p. 110, fn. 5: "das stilles Mondenlicht und Mitternacht ihr Herz mit Gottesruhe füllt". Cf. also the letter from Goethe to Charlotte of 15th October, 1780, in which the same phrase "Um Mitternacht" is used: "Der Mond ist unendlich schön. Ich bin durch die neuen Wege gelaufen da sieht die Nacht himmlisch drein. Die Elfen sangen.

Um Mitternacht wenn die Menschen erst schlafen ...  
(WA.IV.4.314).

- 45) Cf. above, Chapter 2, fn. 61.
- 46) Staiger chooses to ignore this identity of imagery between Um Mitternacht and the early Weimar lyric, and prefers to see instead in the images of the second stanza a prefiguration of the astral symbolism surrounding the figure of Makarie in the Wanderjahre: "... in der Erinnerung an die Sterne keine bereits, noch lyrisch-traumhaft, der Gedanke an die Verklärung Makariens ... an jene 'ätherische Dichtung' also, die bestimmt war, ähnlich wie der



himmlische Rahmen des Faust das Irdische, Unzulängliche und Bedingte auf ein Höchstes auszurichten" (Goethe, Vol.3, p. 172).

- 47) Both Für Ewig and Zwischen beiden Welten, however, only appeared for the first time in Über Kunst und Altertum (1820).
- 48) Goethe, Vol.1, p. 496; this is supported by the remarks in French which introduce the lines "Gewiss ich waere schon so ferne ferne ..." in the letter sent to Charlotte, where Goethe admits that he can speak "de toi, de mon amour pour toi sous mille formes sans que personne l'entende que toi seule".
- 49) Cf. Goethe's letter to Zelter of 11th May, 1820: "... Liebe, Neigung, zwischen zwei Welten schwebend, alles Reale geläutert, sich symbolisch auflösend" (WA.IV.33.27; my italics).
- 50) "... und ich wie der Mond in seinen Veränderungen sich auch gleich" (WA.IV.3.126; cf. above, Chapter 3, fn. 24).
- 51) "Das Shakespeare-Gedicht muß in diesem Zusammenhang als in bedeutungsvoll verhüllter Form zugleich Charlotte zugesprochen gelten ... Was sollte dieses Gedicht, das von hoher Treue über alle Missverständnisse hinweg und zart andeutend von der Wiederkehr einstigen Mondglanzes spricht, in diesem Zusammenhang, wenn es nicht auch der 'Einzigen' zugesprochen wäre?" (Hof, op. cit., Euphorion, 45, pp. 66 and 68).
- 52) "An oddly assorted pair", as Barker Fairley remarks (Goethe as revealed in his poetry, London, 1932, p. 20).
- 53) Karl Viëtor, talking of Der Bräutigam, remarks: "In diesem Gedicht ist gewiß 'das Spezielle so ins Allgemeine emporgehoben', daß es weder nötig noch möglich ist, zu wissen, wer mit der Geliebten gemeint ist ... man könnte eher sagen, daß die Geliebte dieses Gedichts überhaupt keine Person, sondern der Inbegriff, die 'Ewig-Geliebte' aller Liebeserfahrungen Goethes sei" (op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 126 fn.). Cf. also Eduard von der Hellen: "Sie fließt ... mit all den andern Schatten zusammen in ein Idealbild: das Ewig-Weibliche" (JA.2.346).



- 54) Viſtor also draws a parallel between the two lyrics: "Und wieder erwächst das Gedicht [Der Bräutigam] aus der in der letzten Strophe vergegenwärtigten Nachtstunde: gleich und gleichartig-große Augenblicke vergangener Liebeserfahrung werden wach, werden gegenwärtig und wie dort bindet ein Gemeinsames, nun gefühlt und gewußt, Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und nahe Zukunft zu einem einzigen Erfahrungsganzen ..." (op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 125).
- 55) The poem has been variously associated with Lili Schönmemann (Ernst Beutler, Essays on Goethe, Wiesbaden, 1947, Vol.2, p. 79); Christiane Vulpius (G.W. Hertz, GBM, 19, 1931, pp. 221-4); Charlotte von Stein (Hof, op. cit., Euphorion, 45, p. 73); Ulrike von Levetzow (L. Blumenthal, "Goethes Gedicht Der Bräutigam", Goethe 14/15, 1952/53, pp. 120ff., and Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 233); and even with no woman at all (H. Baumgart, Goethes lyrische Dichtung, Vol.1, p. 298). Liselotte Blumenthal comments: "Die Goetheforschung ist ... den 'Spezialissima' so nachgegangen, daß sie meinte, den Entstehungstag errechnen zu könne, und sie hat das Gedicht so ins Allgemeine erhoben, daß es von allen Besonderen völlig losgelöst war" (Goethe 14/15, p. 114).
- 56) Cf. above, pp. 66ff., 118ff. and 255ff., and below, p. 293ff.
- 57) Cf. also WA.I.3.224 and above, Chapter 2, fn. 27.
- 58) Cf. the letter to Zelter of 11th May, 1820: "Un bedingtes Ergeben in den unergründlichen Willen Gottes, heiterer Überblick des beweglichen ... Erdetreibens, Liebe, Neigung, zwischen zwei Welten schwebend, alles Reale geläutert, sich symbolisch auflösend" (WA.IV.33.27).
- 59) Except for a playful reference in a letter to Louise Seidler of 24th February, 1813: "... Knebel spricht entzückt von den tausend und abertausend Wellen, auf denen jene wandelbaren Geisterchen im Mondschein herumgaukeln und bis an seinen Gartenzaun plätschern und schwätzen. Sie sollen, sagt man, alt und jung verführen und das treuloöseste Geschlecht in der Zauberwelt seyn" (WA.IV.23.288-9).



- 60) Cf. Viëtor, op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 127:  
 "Goethes Nachtgedichte wissen nichts von Angst-  
 schauern und Verlassenheit ... Wer in solchem  
 Glauben zu den Sternen aufblickt, ist den Dämonen  
 der Nacht entzogen."
- 61) Cf. WA.I.3.364: Aber wenn der Tag die Welt  
 Wieder auf die Füße stellt,  
 Schwerlich möchte er dir's erfüllen  
 Mit der Frühe bestem Willen;  
 Zu Mittag schon wandelt sich  
 Morgentraum gar wunderbarlich.
- of. also Erich Trunz, HA.1.550: "Die [erste]  
 Strophe hat eine so rein lyrische Sprache, das  
 man zunächst geneigt ist, sie aus den Sprüchen --  
 Goethe hat sie zwischen die Zahme Xenien gestellt  
 -- herauszunehmen und zwischen die späte Lyrik  
 einzureihen. Aber die folgende Strophe gehört  
 dazu. Und deren lehrhafter Schluss, dessen stumpfe  
 Kadenz ganz des lyrischen Zaubers entbehrt, macht  
 das Ganze doch wieder spruchhaft."
- 62) Cf. Paralipomenon 63, WA.I.15,11.173-4.
- 63) W. Schadewaldt, "Zur Entstehung der Elfenzene im  
 zweiten Teil des Faust", in: Schadewaldt, Goethe-  
 studien, Zürich und Stuttgart, 1963, pp. 251-262.
- 64) Ibid.
- 65) Cf. Paralipomenon 63: "... verschwunden alle vor-  
 hergehende Abhängigkeit von Sinnlichkeit und  
 Leidenschaft. Der Geist, gereinigt und frisch nach  
 dem Höchsten strebend ..." (WA.I.15,11.174).
- 66) Cf. JA.4.282-3.
- 67) Cf. above, pp. 112ff., 121 and 133ff.
- 68) Cf. above, pp. 92ff. and 193ff.
- 69) Cf. above, p. 98ff.
- 70) Eckermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 2,  
 p. 186 (17th February, 1831).
- 71) Cf. above, p. 158, and below, p. 326ff.



- 72) Cf. Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 277: "Erst die beruhigte Seele wird zum Spiegel der währenden göttlichen Ordnung. Und aus dem immer noch leicht bewegten 'Glitzern hier' und dem ruhigen 'Glänzen droben', dem Hin und Wider von wandelbarem irdischem und dem Wandel entrücktem himmlischem Dasein, dem Bezug von Dauer und Wechsel, blüht das Vorgefühl von neuem Leben, neuem Ineinanderwirken des Ewigen und Vergänglichen."
- 73) Op. cit., pp. 251-8. Schadewaldt lists the motifs which the two poems have in common: Dämmerung - Dämmerung; senkte sich - Senkt; Nähe fern - nah, fern; Lichts - Lichter; See, Flut - See; Widerspiegelnd - spiegelnd; Zittert - Glitzern; Lunas Zauberschein - Mondes volle Pracht; Sänftigend - Kindesruh, Ruhens Glück; Mondenglanz - Glanze; and he speaks of the "Logik der Motive ... die, unabhängig von der künstlerischen Ausgestaltung, es sehr wohl zu unterscheiden erlaubt, wo ein Motiv unmittelbar gewachsen und wo es abgewandelt und einem neuen Zusammenhang dienstbar geworden ist." Cf. above, p. 32f.
- 74) "Ein Minimum an Mitteln, ein Maximum an Ausdruck; streng im Ausscheiden alles Unwesentlichen und Willkürlichen. Ganz leicht in Zeichnung und Farbe" (Trunz, op. cit., DVLG, 23, p. 422).
- 75) "Nicht eine einzige akustische Wahrnehmung! Alles als Erfahrung des Auges, nur hingestellt, bis auf die eine Wendung in den zusammenfassenden Schlußversen: die Kühle der vollendeten Nacht sänftigt das Herz. Aber diese haptische Erscheinung selbst geschieht durchs Auge!" (Viëtor, op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 123). Viëtor contrasts and compares the "visual" technique in this poem with the earlier, wholly "acoustic" Über allen Gipfeln.
- 76) E.G. Korff, Goethe im Bildwandel seiner Lyrik, Vol.2, p. 331: "... das es zu der seltsamen Gruppe Deutsch-Chinesische Tages- und Jahreszeiten [sic] gehört, ist dem Gedicht so wenig anzusehen, daß diese Tatsache ruhig außer Betracht bleiben kann."
- 77) Goethe, Vol.3, p. 229
- 78) Cf. J. Wiegand, Zur lyrischen Kunst, Tübingen, 1956.



pp. 82-3: "Sollte ein chinesisches Landschaftsbild Anregung gegeben haben, so scheinen mir die auf dem Weiher schmerzenden Weidenzweige und die Spiele des Mondschatens im Geist am ehesten chinesisch anzumuten, wenn auch kein Zug da ist, der in deutscher Landschaft unmöglich wäre." Rilke also remarked on the decorative element in this collection of poems; he wrote to Kippenberg on 3rd February, 1914: "Es kommen die verschiedensten Elemente darin zusammen, will mir scheinen, die bedeutendste lyrische Ergreifung, wie sie [Goethes] mächtigsten Zeilen besitzen, und daneben, ja mitten drin, ein Spielend-Dekoratives ..."

- 79) Eekermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 1, p. 223, (31st January, 1827). Schulz relates this comment closely (and in my opinion wrongly) to the poem, whose "nächtliche Szenerie sich ... kaum merklich vom Tage unterscheidet. Das Bewusstsein der Nacht entsteht darum auch nur durch den Anblick des Mondes" (Anschauung und Darstellung des Mondes, p. 117). It could, however, certainly be true that Goethe derived the imagery of willow-branches and moon from Chinese poetry, as Schulz claims (p. 118), where visual imagery is dominant, and where images are similarly juxtaposed without apparent syntactical or logical relationship.
- 80) Cf. above, pp. 58, 82, 99, 104f. and 115.
- 81) "Die unergründlichen Schauer des Todes und der Abendstern wie eine Verheißung aus anderen Räumen werben um die unentschiedene Seele, bis der Mond die Dunkelheit mit Licht durchwirkt und zwischen den Gegensätzen im Sinne des Lebens vermittelt" (Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, p. 230).
- 82) Cf. Schadewaldt, op. cit., p. 256: "Was im Strophenpaar der Chinesisch-deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten ungerufen aus der erlebten Gegenwart der Nacht mit ihrer sinnlich-geistig empfundenen 'Kühle' sich sänftigend ins Herz des teilnehmenden hingeebenen Betrachters einschleicht, das ist im Faust, der dramatischen Absicht des Vorspiels entsprechend, Wille und Gebot des gnadenvoll-gütigen Naturgeistes, der in Ariel und den Elfen nach dem Shakespearischen Vorbild Gestalt gewinnt."



- 83) Cf. above, p. 254ff.
- 84) Cf. WA.IV.44.291 and 45.1-7 (26th August and 5th October, 1828).
- 85) Baumgart, Goethes lyrische Dichtung, Vol.1, p. 301.
- 86) Cf. the lines from the Chinnesisch-deutsche Jahres- und Tageszeiten:

Hoffnung breitet lichte Schleier  
Nebelhaft vor unsern Blick;  
Wunscherfüllung, Sonnenfeier,  
Wolkenteilung bringt uns Glück,

and the earlier poem Zueignung:

Auf einmal schien die Sonne durchzudringen,  
Im Nebel ließ sich eine Klarheit sehn ...

-- cf. also Emrich, Symbolik von Faust II, pp. 54f. and 372ff.

- 87) Korff, Goethe im Bildwandel seiner Lyrik, Vol.2, p. 333.
- 88) Cf. Viëtor, op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 132: "Nie sind Wahrnehmungen, Impressionen wiedergegeben mit irgendeinem Willen zu exakter Realistik; sondern überall gibt der übrigens ganz einfacher Vorgang in der Wirklichkeit nur die Gelegenheiten her, daß 'Idee und Liebe' sich an ihm entfalten können. Es ist ein am Äußeren entfaltetes Inneres ..."
- 89) Cf. R.D. Gray, Poems of Goethe, p. 193: "The moon, which had always been so meaningful for Goethe, here grows into the full symbol of his love" - though Dr. Gray appears to contradict this idea in his recent book (Goethe, A critical introduction, Cambridge, 1967), when he claims: "The moon in Goethe's poetry is not a symbol or an allegory but an image, one of the comparatively few in his store" (p. 249).
- 90) Cf. Trunz, op. cit., DVLG, 23, p. 429: "... Das Wort 'selig' gehörte damals noch fast nur zum Sprachbereich des Religiösen."
- 91) Cf. the final lines of An den Mond:



Selig, wer sich vor der Welt  
Ohne Haß verschließt ...

- 92) Viëtor, op. cit., Euphorion, 33, p. 131
- 93) Curiously, Goethe's last moon-lyric has some resemblance in theme and imagery to the first stanza of Klopstock's Die frühen Gräber:

Willkommen, o silberner Mond,  
Schöner, stiller Gefährt der Nacht!  
Du entfliehst? Eile nicht, bleib, Gedankenfreund!  
Sehet, er bleibt! Das Gewölk wallte nur hin.

- 94) Cf. WA.IV.4.45, 29 and 119, and above, p. 254ff.



Notes to Chapter Six

- 1) "Die Symbolik verwandelt die Erscheinung in Idee, die Idee in ein Bild, und so, daß die Idee im Bild immer unendlich wirksam und unerreichbar bleibt, und, selbst in allen Sprachen ausgesprochen, doch unaussprechlich bleibe" (WA.I.48.205-6; cf. above, p. 10).
- 2) This question was also discussed in the introductory chapter (cf. above, p. 20ff.); Jung himself has given his reasons why Faust II should be considered in terms of psychological criteria (C.G. Jung, "Psychologie und Dichtung", in: Jung, Gestaltung des Unbewussten, Zürich, 1950, p. 9ff. and passim). Among the critics referred to in the course of this chapter, Karl Kerényi (Das ägäische Fest, Wiesbaden, 1950) and Gottfried Diener (Fausts Weg zu Helena, Stuttgart, 1961) rely very much on Jungian theories; Werner Dankert (Goethe. Der mythische Urgrund seiner Weltanschauung, Berlin, 1951) and Hedwig Vogel (Goethes Menschheitsidee in Naturschau und Dichtung, dargestellt an Faust II, Erlangen, 1937) also rely on mythological and psychological sources and antecedents for their interpretation; Eva A. Meyer (Politische Symbolik bei Goethe, Heidelberg, 1949) deals above all with political and historical elements in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht; and Emil Staiger ("Die klassische Walpurgisnacht in Goethes Faust", NR, 70, 1959, pp. 286-316, and in Staiger, Goethe, Vol.3, pp. 322-357) and Wilhelm Emrich (Die Symbolik von Faust II, Frankfurt & Bonn, 1964) consider the work on almost wholly literary criteria.
- 3) Cf. Eckermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 3, p. 119; 6th May, 1827.
- 4) Cf. Emrich, op. cit., p. 227.
- 5) Staiger, op. cit., NR, 70, p. 316.
- 6) The first mention of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht as "Antezedenzen" and "Einleitung zu Helena" is given in the diaries of 15th and 18th December, 1826, (WA.III.10.282-3), and again in the draft of



17th December, 1826, entitled Helena. Zwischen-spiel zu Faust. Ankündigung: "... Diese kurze Schema sollte freylich mit allen Vortheilen der Dicht- und Redekunst ausgeführt und ausgeschmückt dem Publikum übergeben werden, wie es aber da liegt, diene es einweilen die Antezedenzen bekannt zu machen welche der angekündigten Helena, einem klassisch-romantisch-phantasmagorischen Zwischenspiel zu Faust als vorausgehend genau gekannt und gründlich überdacht werden sollten" (WA.I.15,11.212).

- 7) Cf. the Ankündigung mentioned above (WA.I.15,11.198-212), and Helena. klassisch-romantische Phantasmagorie. Zwischenspiel zu Faust (10th June, 1826; WA.I.15,11.213-4).
- 8) Cf. HA.3.556; Trunz claims that in the revision "der Handlungszusammenhang immer mehr zurück und der Symbolzusammenhang entsprechend hervor trat."
- 9) Trunz, ibid.
- 10) Cf. Trunz, ibid., p. 584, and Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, p. 315: "Um ein genetisches Erfassen des schönen Menschen als des letzten Produkts der sich immer steigenden Natur bemüht sich die klassische Walpurgisnacht."
- 11) Cf. letter to H. Meyer, 20th July, 1831 (WA.IV.49.292).
- 12) "Er muß erst selbst die vormenschliche, vorgestaltige, vorschöne Dämonenwelt der Griechen, aus der sich die hellenische Schönheit erst entwickelte, durchschreiten, den Weg zu Helena gehen, wie ihn die Griechen gingen ... Faust muß erst die organisch-natürliche Entwicklung der griechischen Schönheit durchlaufen, um reif für Helena zu werden" (Fritz Strich, Goethes Faust, Bern & München, 1964, pp. 120-1). The fact that Faust himself is physically absent from this process (indeed, his appearance in the whole Klassische Walpurgisnacht is relatively limited, and is largely concerned with the requirements of the dramatic action) does not alter the fact that it is a part of his development: "Es geht hier ... oft nicht mehr um Faust, zum mindesten nicht um Faust als Charakter, als Individualität, zu der ein bestimmtes menschliches Schicksal gehören



würde. Es geht um die Natur der Dinge -- de rerum natura -- um den Staat, um Jugend und Alter, Antike und Neuzeit, den Norden und Hellas, Anfang und Ende des Lebens, das Chaos und die Gestalt. Und Faust ist -- zwar nicht immer, aber auf weite Strecken -- nur dazu da, das Wesen der Dinge in einem Gemüt, in einem Geist aufleuchten zu lassen" (Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, p. 315).

- 13) Staiger, ibid., p. 286; cf. also Helene Herrmann, "Faust, 2. Teil. Studien zur inneren Form", ZfAuaK. 12 (1916/17), p. 98: "Helenas Gestalt und Stimme ist wirklich im dichterischen Sinne eine Geburt der Walpurgisnacht."
- 14) Cf. Bokermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 1, p. 201 (15th January, 1827).
- 15) As indeed Goethe had originally intended, even in the first draft -- cf. WA.I.15,11.212.
- 16) Emrich, Die Symbolik von Faust II, p. 301; cf. also ibid. -- "'Da bin ich! Da!'", das kann sie nunmehr bald sprechen, nachdem alle 'Antezedenzen', alle Vorstufen und Aufbauelemente ihres Erscheinens dargestellt sind. Ihre Genesis ist zu Ende. Ihre Erscheinung setzt ein." Emrich also points out that Goethe was so keen that the Klassische Walpurgisnacht should end with the Meerfest as the immediate Ankündigung Helenas that he planned, after the completion of the second act, to insert the now redundant scene of Faust's descent to Hades and his petition to Persephone into a Prolog des dritten Aktes -- which he eventually dropped altogether (cf. Paralipomenen 157, WA.I.15,11.224).
- 17) Cf. JA.39.349-50; cf. also Trunz, op. cit., p. 557ff., Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, p. 288ff., and Diener, op. cit., pp. 308f., 577ff. and 580ff.
- 18) On night as the symbol of the unconscious in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, cf. Diener, op. cit., pp. 296, 497, 521 and passim, and Danckert, op. cit., p. 31ff.
- 19) Cf. Trunz, op. cit., p. 559: "Das Gestirn [der klassischen Walpurgisnacht] ist der Mond, während später, als Helena da ist, die Sonne zum Gestirn wird"; Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, pp. 288-9;



"Dann [im Helena-Akt] wird ein klarer Tag anbrechen. Jetzt aber [in der klassischen Walpurgisnacht] ist noch Nacht und überglänzt der Mond, das Licht der Innerlichkeit, die träumerische Natur"; and Diener, *op. cit.*, p. 487: "Während der 'schöne Mensch' als 'das letzte Produkt der sich immer steigernden Natur' unter der Herrschaft der im Zenit stehenden und verharrenden Sonne, am Mittag also (des Tages, des Lebens, der Weltentwicklung) in Erscheinung tritt, ist Mitternacht der Augenblick, in dem natürliches, körperliches Leben entsteht und vergeht, in dem die geistige Entelechie sich dem Strom organischen Werdens überlässt oder das leibliche Dasein wieder aufgibt, um sich zu unstofflich-engelhafter Wesenheit emporzusteigern" (Diener's italics).

Hedwig Vogel (*op. cit.*, pp. 84-5) also points out: "Die Hervorhebung des Mondhaften in der klassischen Walpurgisnacht kann als eine Art Bestätigung empfunden werden, daß wir wirklich die urphänomenale Ebene des Naturseins erreicht haben, in der die treibenden Kräfte der schaffenden Natur Geister-Zwiesprache miteinander halten"; but she goes on to see Helena herself as a mythical moon-figure, the personification of the spiritual aspect of the moon's nature, which comprehends all change, and whose presence is eternal (p. 84). Benno von Wiese follows this interpretation: "Aber Helena spielt noch weiter unsichtbar mit, auch als Faust bereits verschwunden ist und den dunklen Weg in die Unterwelt angetreten hat. In den Metamorphosen der Mondgöttin, Diana, Luna, Hekate (? -- cf. below, p. 332f.), die im mythischen Mondfest gipfeln, bei dem der Mond im Zenit verharret, ist Selene-Helena jene unsichtbare Innenseite der werdenden Natur, die sich in der hohen festlichen Stunde mit dem geistigen Sonnenprinzip des Helios vereinigen kann" (Die deutsche Tragödie von Lessing bis Hebbel, Hamburg, 1948, p. 154). This identification of Helena with the lunar element in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is a speculative observation based on extrinsic mythological associations rather than on textual reference to Goethe's Faust, and is hardly tenable in the light of Helena's clear association with the sun; at best we can claim that Helena's counterpart in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, the perfect beauty of Galatea, is associated with the moon (cf. below, p. 345f.). W.H. Roscher points out the general mythological



association of Helen as a moon-heroine -- i.e. as the mortal counterpart to Aphrodite/Selene -- but he, too, treats this with some reservation: " ... Wahrscheinlich hat es auch eine Aphrodite-klasse von Mondheroinnen gegeben, z.B. Helena und Phaidra ...., doch muß es einer besonderen Untersuchung vorbehalten bleiben, die nahe Verwandtschaft der genannten Heroinnen mit dem besonderen Mondgöttinntypus, zu dem sie gehören, im Einzelnen nachzuweisen." (Roscher, Über Selene und Verwandtes, Leipzig, 1890, p. 147; cf. also ibid., p. 83).

- 20) Cf. above, pp. 175ff., 178ff., 251ff., 290f. and passim.
- 21) Cf. Dorothea Lohmeyer, Faust und die Welt, Potsdam, 1940, p. 55: "Der Prolog, mit dem Erichtho das Fest öffnet, stellt die Sphäre des Historischen der mythischen Wirklichkeit der Geisterfeier gegenüber ... sie ist vorzüglich mit der antiken Historie verbunden: sie redet antikisch, sie ist als die Wahrsagerin des Pompeius aus der Geschichte bekannt, sie spricht in objektiven Sätzen Goethe Mißbehagen an der Gesetzlosigkeit alles politischen Geschehens aus ... In ihr wurde die Wiederkunft der Antike als einer nur vergangenen Zeit Gestalt ... So verschwindet sie, sobald sie Leben wittert, und mit ihr die magische Wiederbelebung einer nur historisch vergangenen Zeit. An Stelle des Schauderfestes, das die sich wiederbelebenden Toten an dem Jahrestag der pharsalischen Schlacht geben, feiert man nun die klassische Walpurgisnacht, die heitere Wiederauferstehung der mythischen Welt." Cf. also Erich, op. cit., p. 259: "Die fast fragmentarische Kürze dieses Erichthomonologs ist das Zeugnis für den Sieg des naturphänomenologisch Klassischen über das Historische der Frühkonzeption."
- 22) Cf. WA.I.15,11.203: Faust, Mephisto, Homunculus (and Wagner) "gelangen ... beim Lichte des klaren obschon abnehmenden Mondes zur Fläche Thessaliens."
- 23) A similar theme to that of the ballad Die Braut von Korinth; cf. Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, p. 305: "Es ist nicht der volle, sondern der 'unvollkommene', wie wir aus den Entwürfen wissen, abnehmende Mond. Der schwächere Glanz verbreitet eine eigentümlich milde Trauer. Es ist, als deute Goethe an, daß unsere Erinnerung langsam verblaßt ... Ein Vorgang hat begonnen, der in Jahrhunderten oder Jahrtausenden



mit gänzlichem Entschwinden der antiken Götter enden wird, gemäß dem immer strengeren Glauben Goethes an die Vergänglichkeit aller Gebilde des Lebens und der Kunst."

- 24) Cf. above, pp. 62ff., 94 and 159f., and the poem Nachts, wann gute Geister schweifen.
- 25) Cf. above, ibid.
- 26) Cf. above, p. 237f.
- 27) Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, pp. 286-7.
- 28) Cf. above, pp. 193ff. and 198ff.
- 29) Cf. WA.I.32.336 and above, p. 190ff.
- 30) Emrich, Die Symbolik von Faust II., pp. 257 & 220; cf. also ibid., pp. 257-8: "Dem Mondlicht ... widerstreitet die Trugwelt rein zeitverfallener Parteienkämpfe ... Parteienkämpfe stehen nicht in der Ursprungsnähe zu Boden und Licht. Wie sich später großartig im Parteienkampf zwischen Pygmäen und Kranichen, Anaxagoras und Thales die Zerrüttung von Boden und Mondlicht (Erdbeben und wahnhafter Mondsturz) als die eigentlichen Katastrophen geschichtlichen Lebens ungeheuerlich abheben von der lebendigen, biologisch ursprünglichen Antike -- die ausdrücklich unter dem Zeichen eines Mondes hervortritt, der 'im Zenit verharrt' --, so zeichnet sich auch bereits hier am Anfang dieser klassischen Nacht zunächst eine düster geschichtliche Parteienwelt ab -- Urformen politischen Daseins unschreibend, ohne die auch das organische Dasein nicht zu bestehen vermag, aber über die sich dann das eigentlich Große der Antike erhebt, getragen vom 'Boden' und verklärt vom 'Mondglanz'."
- 31) Cf. Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, p. 289; among the works Goethe knew are Creuzer's Symbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker, besonders der Griechen (1810-12), and Schelling's Über die Gottheiten von Samothrake (1815).
- 32) "Wir sehen nicht mehr die Antike selber, sondern Antike gespiegelt in einem modernen Gemüt, wie eingetaucht in flutende Innerlichkeit und unter neuen Voraussetzungen erst einer neuen Festigung



harrend" (Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, p. 289); cf. also Emrich, Symbolik von Faust II, p. 260: "Schauder, Mond und Geschichte sind die Vorformen einer Antike, deren Tiefe mehr im 'Großen' an sich, im 'Ungeheuren' und außergewöhnlich 'Gebildeten' ruht, als im klassizistisch formstrengen Ideal edler Einfalt und stiller Größe."

- 33) Cf. the episode in Klingsohrs Märchen, where the sun burns itself out to a clinker and must give way to the reign of fantasy (Ginnistan) -- Novalis, Schriften, ed. Kluckhohn, Vol.1, p. 307; cf. also above, Chapter 1, fn. 91.
- 34) Novalis, ibid., p. 252; other typical Romantic associations of moonlight with the sphere of fantasy and Märchen are Tieck's poem Mondscheinlied, Brentano's Szene aus meinen Kinderjahren, Eichendorff's In Danzig, etc.
- 35) Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, pp. 289-90; cf. also Goethe's remark to Eckermann: "Die klassische Walpurgisnacht muß in Reimen geschrieben werden, und doch muß alles einen antiken Charakter tragen. Eine solche Versart zu finden, ist nicht leicht" (Eckermann, Gespräche mit Goethe, ed. cit., Part 1, p. 201; 15th January, 1827). Cf. also Kurt May, Faust II in der Sprachform gedeutet, München, 1962, p. 115: "Die klassische Walpurgisnacht wird metrisch-rhythmisch keineswegs im reinen, vollen Gegensatz zur nordisch-romantischen gestaltet, sondern so, daß aus der erst nach dem Ende zu wachsenden Durchdringung der vertrauten nordisch-faustischen mit neu-antikischer Gestaltweise sich diese allmählich vorherrschend herauslöst, um in III,1 allein zu regieren."
- 36) E.g. vv. 7511-2:

Blinkend, wo die Zitterwellen,  
Ufernetzend, leise schwellen ...

and vv. 8037-41:

Blicke ruhig von dem Bogen  
Deiner Nacht auf Zitterwogen  
Mildeblitzend Glanzgewimmel  
Und erleuchte das Getümmel,  
Das sich aus den Wogen hebt!



- 37) Cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 321: "Goethe gebraucht ... das Bild der Sirene, um etwas Schönes, Anziehendes zu verbildlichen (weibliche und musische Reize), dem wahrer Ernst und wahre Größe fehlen, so daß es für den empfänglichen Dichter und Liebenden 'gefährlich', 'verführerisch' ist, ohne zum großen Wagnis zu 'verführen'."
- 38) Cf. Emrich, op. cit., p. 270: Mephisto "ist Verneiner und Verkünder der christlich-romantischen Welt ineins."
- 39) Cf. above, note 36, and Diener, op. cit., p. 322: "Goethe verspottet hier sicher u.a. Verse der Romantiker (Tiecks, Brentanos), die über musikalischem Wohlklang und Schwelgen in zierlichen Reimverschlingungen oft den greifbaren Inhalt und das treffende Wort versäumen." Goethe is not only ironising Romantic lyric poetry here, however; he is also indicating an essential distinction between old and new music, between the naïve, "classical" music of Bach and the older Italian masters, which he describes as "bedeutend", as opposed to the sentimental, "gefällige" music of later, Romantic composers; cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 322ff., and Emrich, op. cit., p. 269ff.
- 40) E.g. Tieck, Erstes Finden. Nacht. Mondberglänzte Zaubernacht. etc., and Brentano, Wiegenlied. Säusle. liebe Myrte. Der goldne Tag ist hingegangen. etc. In the Meerfest scene, however, as we shall see, the sounds and rhythms of the Sirens' lyrical "moonlight" verses have as much in common with Goethe's own late lyrics as with Tieck or Brentano.
- 41) Diener, op. cit., p. 407: "So werden aus Verführerinnen Führerinnen, statt des 'gefälligen', aber gehaltlosen 'Singsangs' stimmen sie nun bedeutungsvolle hymnische Lieder an"; cf. also Emrich, op. cit., p. 271: "Indem sich im Verlauf des Geschehens immer mehr die kunst- und lebensgenetischen Elemente des Daseins positiv produktiv herauschälen, werden die 'Sängerinnen' bejaht, ja sie erhalten durchweg die Macht, das Geschehen zu deuten, zu klären und zu fördern, aus dem einfachen Grund, weil sie die Vertreter des Gesangs und der Poesie sind, d.h. eine darstellende und bewusstmachende Funktion haben."



- 42) Cf. Trunz, op. cit., pp. 562-3: "Goethes optische Phantasie zeigt stets die Geschultheit durch seine Farbenlehre, die zugleich Farbensymbolik ist." On this "Farbensymbolik", Diener comments: "Auf dem durch das Mondlicht erhellten Hintergrunde brennen nun die Feuer blau ... Auch die blaue Farbe paßt zu dem geheimnisvollen Geschehen der Wundernacht: 'Diese Farbe macht für das Auge eine sonderbare und fast unaussprechliche Wirkung ...'" (cf. JA.40.93f.). Cf. also WA.II.1.62-3: "Das höchstenergische Licht ... durch ein auch nur wenig trübes Mittel gesehen, erscheint uns gelb. Nimmt die Trübe eines solchen Mittels zu, oder wird seine Tiefe vermehrt, so sehen wir das Licht nach und nach eine gelbrote Farbe annehmen, die sich endlich bis zum Rubinroten steigert. Wird hingegen durch ein trübes, von einem darauffallenden Lichte erleuchtetes Mittel die Finsternis gesehen, so erscheint uns eine blaue Farbe, welche immer heller und blässer wird, je mehr sich die Trübe des Mittels vermehrt, hingegen immer dunkler und satter sich zeigt, je durchsichtiger das Trübe werden kann" (Physische Farben, X, 150-51).
- 43) Hedwig Vogel points out that though the Sphinxes are by nature indestructible and imply an infinity of duration, in that they are the objects by which spatial time is measured, they themselves can have no idea of true timelessness or infinity beyond spatial chronological relationships because they are zeitgebunden, and have no place in the recreation of timeless myth (Vogel, op. cit., p. 79).
- 44) Cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 378, and Egmont II,11: "Kind! Kind! Nicht weiter! Wie von unsichtbaren Geistern gepeitscht, gehen die Sonnenpferde der Zeit mit unsers Schicksals leichtem Wagen durch ..." (WA.I.8.220).
- 45) Cf. Ernst Busch, "Die klassische Walpurgisnacht", GBM, 31 (1943), p. 79: "Helena ist gewissermaßen dem antiken Bereich enthoben, sie kann jedem begegnen, den der Wandel der Zeit an den Rand des Urgrundes schleudert, so sie sich aufhält. Und die das harrende zeitlose Sein umkreisende Zeit, die sich in dem ewig schweifenden Chiron verkörpert, bringt auch den nordischen Wanderer an dieses Ziel." Cf. also Diener, op. cit., p. 378: "In Chiron, der an der Stelle einer historischen Katastrophe



[the Battle of Pydna, 168 B.C.] auf den Wahn der größten irdischen Gebilde hinweist, und in Manto begegnen sich das Zeitliche und das Ewige im Menschen und in der Menschheitsgeschichte." (Diener's italics).

- 46) Cf. Eva Meyer, op. cit., p. 46: "Die politisch-historische Wirklichkeit Griechenlands endet, mit der Heroenzeit ist es vorbei, denn der König flieht und der Bürger triumphiert, aber ewig bleibt der im Mondschein auf diesem Boden stehende Tempel, die in den Seelen weiterlebende Welt griechischer Kultur und Schönheit. In diesem Tempel hilft Manto dem Faust zur Erlangung der Helena."
- 47) Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, p. 316.
- 48) Cf. above, pp. 120ff., 153ff. and 157ff.
- 49) Cf. above, p. 202ff., and fig. 9.
- 50) Above, p. 212f.
- 51) Cf. Staiger, op. cit., p. 305, who points out that in the final scene of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht, "Jahrzehnte Goethescher Schönheitserfahrung in das Prachtgewebe gewirkt sind", among which are recollections of Italy: "Das Mittelmeer, der südliche Himmel, sizilische Buchten schimmern herein." Cf. also Eva Meyer, op. cit., pp. 85-6: "Eine Quelle der Stärke, mit der diese Szene gestaltet ist, stammt doch wohl aus der Tatsache, daß Goethe das 'Meer- und Inselhafte' der griechischen Landschaft, wie er es in Großgriechenland so freudig erlebte, vierzig Jahre lang ungestaltet in sich trug ... Erst als er den Mond, 'im Zenit verharren' läßt, verwandeln sich diese Sinneseindrücke in Idee, und nun erlangt er die Organe, alles darzustellen."
- 52) Cf. above, pp. 149ff., 283ff. and passim.
- 53) Staiger, Goethe, Vol. 3, p. 277, on the Notturmo of the elves' chorus; cf. also Diener, op. cit., pp. 489-90: "Luna ... soll 'ruhig von dem Bogen' der ihr gehörigen Nacht ... herunterblicken und durch Spiegelung in den 'Zitterwagen' auf die liebevolle Durchdringung von Oben und Unten, von elementaren und göttlichen Mächten hindeuten."



- 54) On the archetypal association of the moon and water, cf. above, Chapter 1, fn. 77.
- 55) Cf. above, p. 278ff.
- 56) Cf. above, p. 284ff.
- 57) Cf. above, pp. 98ff. and 282ff.
- 58) Cf. above, p. 99ff. and passim. This association of the moon with dew was also a feature of ancient folklore -- cf. Roscher, Über Selene und Verwandten, pp. 49ff.: "Der Mond und Selene als Tauspender".
- 59) Cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 486: "Der Ursprung des Lebens aus dem Wasser ist ein Heilsvorgang, ein Mysterium, und das 'heilte Meerfest', bei dem dieser Heilsvorgang geschaut, verehrt und mitvollzogen wird, ist ein Mysterienfeier. Ihr symbolisch dargestellter, kultisch gefeierter Sinn ist das Geheimnis, 'wie man entstehn und sich verwandeln kann', das Stirb und Werde im natürlichen Lebensbereich ... Die über das ägäische Fest freundlich waltende Göttin, der die des Heils bedürftigen Geister huldigen, ist die 'schöne Luna', der 'Mond, im Zenit verharrend'." Busch also points out the healing significance of the moon and dew here: "Die verwandelnden Mächte sind zugleich erlösende Mächte, voller Gnade und Heil. Die Sirenen erflehen die Gnade des Mondes. Sie wissen um seinen heiligen Tau, der gesund macht" (GRM, 31, p. 86).
- 60) Cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 440: "Die Gründe, durch die sich Thales-Goethe dennoch zum Widerspruch gegen die vulkanistische These des Anaxagoras gereizt fühlt, liegen erstens in der Übertreibung dieser Theorie; zweitens in der Form, wie sie Anaxagoras vertritt; drittens in der Sinnlosigkeit solcher Streitgespräche wissenschaftlicher Parteien, deren Anschauungen schließlich doch von der ihrer Natur gemäßen 'Vorstellungsart' diktiert werden."
- 61) Cf. JA.37.247.
- 62) Eva Meyer suggests an interesting, but specifically political interpretation of the pause here: "... So darf diese Pause für historische Zeit angesehen werden: die Zeit nach dem Ende des peloponnesischen



Krieges, in dem die Bodenkräfte des Griechentums sich erschöpft haben bis zu Alexander dem Großen, und die Spitze, die der Berg dann von außen durch den herabfallenden Fels erhält, würde auf die scharfe, große, kurze Macht hindeuten, die griechisches politisches Großtum durch Alexanders Siege erfährt, aber durch die 'so Freund als Feind gequetscht, erschlagen' wird" (op. cit., p. 82); she also describes the whole Thales-Anaxagoras conflict as one between the "Seelenmensch" and the "Tatenmensch" -- a similar duality to that of Tasso and Antonio (ibid., p. 80ff.).

63) Cf. Meyer, ibid., p. 41 and Diener, op. cit., p. 444ff.

64) These are, moreover, attributes which had long been associated for Goethe with the influence of the moon and moonlight -- the peaceful, soothing light of the early Weimar lyrics (cf. above, p. 112ff.), and particularly of An den Mond:

Lösest endlich auch einmal  
Meine Seele ganz ...

65) Cf. Roscher, Über Selene und Verwandtes, pp. 70, 75, 114f. and passim, and Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie, article: Hekate, Vol.1, p. 1885ff.

The whole notion of the lunar deity as a trinity is a primordial one, and, as Robert Briffault claims, the basis of all subsequent triune deities (The Mothers, Vol.2, p. 603ff. and Vol.3, p. 84ff.); it is presumably derived from the three faces of the moon presented at its varying phases as waxing crescent, full moon and waning crescent (ibid., Vol.2, p. 603). The work by P. von Köppen, Die dreigestaltige Hekate und ihre Rolle in den Mysterien (1823) was in Goethe's possession, and Goethe also sketched a Mondbeschwörung scene (L. Münz, Goethes Zeichnungen und Radierungen, Wien, 1949, Abb. 168); cf. also Tischbein's engraving Thessalische Zauberinnen, den Mond beschwörend, reproduced in Witkowski's edition of Faust (Vol.2, Abb. 36, p. 499), which was derived from the same vase as the slightly different copy by Gerhard reproduced in Roscher, Über Selene und Verwandtes, Tafel III, Fig. 3.



- 66) Cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 445: "In die holde Luna sieht er immer mehr die dämonische 'alte Macht' der Hekate hinein, die sich in 'wohlthätigem', mehr noch in 'fürchterlichem' Sinne äußern kann." Diener associates this ambivalence of the powers of Hecate as a parallel to the dual aspect of Goethe's notion of "das Dämonische" (cf. JA.25.123ff.).
- 67) It would seem that Homunculus, rather than Thales, is here a more faithful representative of Goethe's own attitude towards the vulcanist-neptunist debate, particularly in its application to the human as opposed to the geophysical sphere; both Diener and Emrich draw attention to the more general, positive symbolism implied in the image of the meteor for Goethe, as representing the demonic and potentially creative force of the great genius or hero (Diener, op. cit., p. 453ff. and Emrich, op. cit., p. 285ff.).
- 68) It is interesting that in the final version Thales and Homunculus withdraw voluntarily to the shores of the Aegean; in the draft of December 1826 Thales was forced to retreat when Anaxagoras was acclaimed as a demigod by the crowd (WA.I.15.11.207). It would appear that in the final version Goethe intended to discredit and rout the vulcanists more decisively, while the theme of the demagogue receiving the cheap acclaim of the masses is now incorporated into Anaxagoras's previous suggestion that Homunculus should set himself up as king of the Pygmies (v. 7877ff.).
- 69) Cf. above, p. 313ff., and Emrich, op. cit., p. 273: "Unzweideutig hat Goethe in ihnen gezeigt, was das Ganze sollte und soll: eine Demonstration der Wiedergeburt von Schönheit und Kunst. Als Sängern stehen die Sirenen im Bereich der Poesie, als singende, deutende, klärende und hymnisch beschwingte Verkünderinnen der Schönheit weisen sie unausgesetzt auf das Thema der ganzen Walpurgisnacht."
- 70) Cf. above, p. 313ff.
- 71) Cf. Kerényi, op. cit., p. 48: "Des Dichters schöpferischer Überfluß wählt ein ursprüngliches, rein naturhaftes Fest zum eigenen Spielraum: eine Mondnacht in der ihr eigentümlichen Festlichkeit, die durch die evokative Macht des sagenhaften Ortes



und der historischen Jahreswende nur gesteigert wird. Und es geschieht, was zum Wesen eines jeden echten Festes gehört: ein mythologischer Aspekt der Welt -- hier der Mondbeherrschte -- enthüllt sich ... Es erscheine, was erscheinen mag. Auch die unwahrscheinlichste mythologische Gestalt schöpft sich Realität aus diesen Wirklichen: aus der Festlichkeit einer thessalischen oder ägäischen Mondnacht." On the rôle of the moon in ancient cults and mysteries, cf. Roscher, Über Selene und Verwandtes, p. 8ff.

- 72) Vogel, op. cit., p. 84; cf. also Trunz, HA.3.559: "In dem Mond vereinigt sich das Natürliche, das Kultische, das Magische ... Festliche Gesänge ertönen, heiter, unterbrochen von Ironie und Scherz. Es ist ein heidnisches Mysterium, anders als das christliche am Ende des 5. Aktes, anders auch als die Walpurgisnacht des 1. Teils, die in Lilith gipfelt, wie diese in Galatea ..."
- 73) Cf. Wolf, Der Mond im deutschen Volksglauben, passim; Roscher, Über Selene und Verwandtes, p. 55ff. and passim; Briffault, The Mothers, Vol.2, p. 583ff. and passim; Jung, Collected Works, ed. cit., Vol.9, part 1, p. 185; and above, Chapter 1, fn. 77. The elements of fertility in the Meerfest scene are represented primarily by the phallic Kabiren, gods of birth and fertility, "Die sich immerfort selbst erzeugen / Und niemals wissen, was sie sind" (vv. 8076-7; cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 495ff.).
- 74) Cf. Emrich, op. cit., p. 285: "Die Erscheinung der Schönheit und das Werden des Genius gipfelt in einem triumphalen Preis der vier Elemente beim großen Wasserfeste im ägäischen Meer. Dabei ist eine Voraussetzung entscheidend: die Zeit steht still. Der Mond verharrt im Zenit ... Der Weltlauf steht still, die Zeit hält ihren Atem an, um dem 'mildeblitzend Glanzgewimmel', dem ewig 'ruhigen Blick' des Mondes zu weichen,... Die geschichtliche Welt, der 'Tag' verstummt, um dem natürlichen Sein, dem biologischen Weben und Werden Raum zu verschaffen."
- 75) Cf. above, p. 312. There is, strictly speaking, no indication that the moon in the final version of the Klassische Walpurgisnacht is in fact on the wane -- we only know that it is not full (vv. 7031 & 7127), and it is from the draft of December 1826 that we gather it is waning (WA.I.15.11.203); there is, however, no reason to assume that Goethe altered this image between the draft and the final version



-- certainly, a waxing moon would hardly have been appropriate here.

- 76) Cf. Staiger, op. cit., NR. 70, pp. 288-9: "... Aus all dem Ungewissen, Schwankenden bilden sich schließlich die reinen Konturen, der gültige Umriss, der nicht um Haaresbreite mehr eine Veränderung duldet und nach den halbgeglückten und wieder verworfenen Versuchen der proteischen Physis mit Monstren und Fabelwesen den Willen Gottes vollendet darstellt. Dann wird ein klarer Tag anbrechen. Jetzt aber ist noch Nacht und überglänzt der Mond, das Licht der Innerlichkeit, die träumerische Natur ..."
- 77) Cf. Dorothea Lohmeyer, op. cit., p. 70: "Wenn sich das Meerfest gerade in dem Augenblick ereignet, da der Mond die Höhe seiner Bahn erreicht und einen Augenblick im Zenit verharret, so verrät dies Zeichen, was jene Besonderheit bedeutet: ... Die Walpurgisnacht ist Name und Zeichen für einen glücklichen Augenblick. Ein solcher Augenblick, den Goethe im Märchen auch Glückliche Stunde nennt, ist dadurch ausgezeichnet, daß eine beschränkte Reihe von Kräften darin so glücklich zusammenwirken, daß Leben zu einer höheren Stufe emporsteigt ..."
- 78) Cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 488: "Für Goethes Gefühl ist im Augenblick der Mitternacht die Zeit gleichsam ausgeschaltet: in ihr tauchen ewige Gefühle und dauernde Gedanken auf, und so ist sie auch das passende Gleichnis für die zeitlos-ewigen Momente im Leben des Menschen und des Alls ..."
- 79) Cf. above, pp. 36 and 338, and Briffault, op. cit., Vol.2, p. 574: "The moon is commonly regarded as the First Woman, or the mother of mankind."
- 80) Cf. ibid., Vol.3, p. 184: "The Holy Virgin is universally identified with the moon. She is called 'the Moon of the Church', 'Our Moon', 'the Spiritual Moon', the 'Perfect and Eternal Moon' ... The peasantry in most parts of Europe fail to distinguish clearly between the Virgin Mary and the moon. Thus in France the peasants of the Perche district call the moon 'Notre Dame'. In Portugal no distinction is drawn between the two; the country people call the moon 'the Mother of God' ... etc."



- 81) Kerényi, op. cit., p. 64: "Man glaubt als antwortende Stimme den Chorus Mysticus zu hören vom ewig heranziehenden Ewig-Weiblichen."
- 82) Ibid., p. 66.
- 83) Cf. WA.II.1.160-1; II.12.10, 15, 18-19 etc., and II.12.213-4, and above, pp. 152f. and 227f.
- 84) Cf. Kerényi, op. cit., p. 67: "Goethe setzt hier ... das Aphrodisische durch die Wölkchentauben in eine ausgesprochene Beziehung zum Monde", and Diener, op. cit., p. 541: "In den liebesbrünstigen und doch wie feine leuchtende Cirruswölkchen den Mond umgebenden Tauben reicht aphroditische Liebes- und Zeugungskraft in rein stofflicher und in lunarisch verklärter Form aus 'alten Zeiten' bis in die Gegenwart hinein."
- 85) Other examples of cirrus-cloud symbolism in Faust II, apart from the final scene, are found in Act IV, where it represents "Seelenschönheit", and at the same time serves as a premonition of Gretchen's Verklärung in the scene in Heaven (v. 10055ff.); and in the Marienbader Elegie (v. 37ff.).
- 86) Cf. also vv. 11985-8:  
       Lösset die Flocken los  
       Die ihn umgeben!  
       Schon ist er schön und groß  
       Von heiligem Leben.
- 87) Diener also hints at this correspondence between the two scenes: "Über diesem mitternächtigen Augenblick, da das zeitlos ewige Mysterium des Zeugens, Entstehens, Sichwandelns organischen Lebens geschieht, soll 'ruhig' und 'gnädig' das weibliche Gestirn walten, wie am Ende des Dramas Metamorphose und Wachstum der geistigen Entelechie zu immer höheren Graden engelhafter Existenz durch die gnadenreiche Mittlertätigkeit des in der Mater Gloriosa personifizierten 'ewig-Weiblichen' geschieht ... Im irdischen und im himmlischen Wandlungsmysterium verhelfen weibliche Kräfte der Hingabe, der 'Entselbstung' den sehnuchtsvoll strebenden Geistern zu stofflicher Zeugung und Entwicklung, zu 'höherer Begattung' oder gar zu 'höhern Sphären' der Gottesnähe durch



die bewegende, umschaffende, erhebende Kraft der himmlischen oder irdischen Liebe" (op. cit., p. 489; Diener's italics). Cf. also W. Hertz, Natur und Geist in Goethes Faust, p. 176.

- 88) Cf. Kerényi, op. cit., p. 65: "Als Geister der Helios-Insel Rhodos sind die Telchines die Boten des apollinischen Sonnengottes am Feste seiner Schwester, der Mondgöttin. Und als Vertreter männlicher Schaffensfreude künden sie von einer anderen Möglichkeit des faustischen Strebens nach dem Unerreichlichen: vom Kunstwerk."
- 89) Cf. Diener, ibid., p. 533: "Bei Lunas nächtlicher Feier ist der 'Bruder' zwar nicht persönlich zugegen, aber als lichtiges Prinzip in seinen Verehrern, den dem Helios geweihten Urbewohnern von Rhodos ideell vergegenwärtigt. Deshalb stimmen diese nun einen Pöan auf das göttliche Geschwisterpaar an, in dem sich die Polarität von Tag und Nacht zur Einheit des vollen Tages zusammenschließt ... das unbewusste Schaffen des dem weiblichen Monde zugeordneten Naturlebens und das klar bewusste Schaffen des in der Sonne verbildlichten Menschengeistes sind polare Gegensätze, die sich doch gegenseitig ergänzen und steigern: die 'nächtig' wirkende Natur strebt nach immer größerer Klarheit des Bewusstseins und der sonnenhafte Geist darf seinen Ursprung aus dem dunklen Schoß des Unbewussten nicht verleugnen."
- 90) Cf. Goethe's remarks on Greek sculpture in Die Italienische Reise, where he attempts "zu erforschen, wie jene unvergleichlichen Künstler verfahren, um aus der menschlichen Gestalt den Kreis göttlicher Bildung zu entwickeln ... Ich habe eine Vermutung, daß sie nach eben den Gesetzen verfahren, nach welchen die Natur verfährt und denen ich auf der Spur bin" (WA.I.30.264).
- 91) Benno von Wiese, Die deutsche Tragödie, p. 155; cf. also K.J. Obenauer, Der faustische Mensch, Jena, 1922, p. 94: "Das Unmögliche begehrt die Kunst, indem sie das zeitlos Urschöne in eine scheinhafte Materie hineinzaubert. Die Kunst vollendet im Schein das, was die Natur nicht vermag: sie vergöttert den Menschen für die Gegenwart, in der das Vergangene wie das Zukünftige begriffen ist. Helena, Königin im Traumreich der Kunst ... ist an keine Zeit gebunden."



- 92) Cf. von Wiese, op. cit., p. 154, who, like Hedwig Vogel, (cf. above, fn. 19), goes as far as to identify Helena with the lunar element in the Klassische Walpurgisnacht: "Helena ... entstammt jenem mythischen Urbereich, der in der klassischen Walpurgisnacht sich geisterhaft vor uns entfaltet. Sie ist nicht selbst Natur, aber die innerste Seele des in der Natur wirkenden Eros, der in Galatee und dem Fest des Werdens gipfelt. Der Muschelwagen der Galatee und die historische Sagengestalt der Helena sind nur verschiedene Verwirklichungen des einen mythischen Traumes der Schönheit ..."

This complete identification of Helena with Galatea is counter to Emrich's interpretation, with which my own analysis of the moon and Galatea as part of Helena's Antezedenzen has more in common than with the von Wiese/Vogel interpretation; cf. Emrich, op. cit., p. 301: "... So hilft Galatee Helena vorbereiten, ohne selbst Helena zu sein" -- Galatea is essentially the mythical, lunar counterpart and forerunner of the solar heroine, not the heroine herself.

- 93) Cf. Diener, op. cit., p. 503, and Goethe's poem Geweihter Platz:

Wenn zu den Reihen der Nymphen, versammelt in  
heilliger Mondnacht,

Sich die Grazien heimlich herab von Olympus gesellen ...  
(WA.I.2.128).

- 94) On the theme of the young child or youth rescued from the waves, and of Entsagung here, cf. Emrich, op. cit., p. 298 and passim.



### Notes to Conclusion

- 1) Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, p. 300, fn. 12.
- 2) Young, Night Thoughts, Third Night, v. 36.
- 3) Cf. van Tieghem, Le Sentiment de la Nature dans le Preromantisme Européen, p. 128.
- 4) The definition of the lyrical idiom understood here is based on the criteria suggested by Emil Staiger in his Grundbegriffe der Poetik (Zürich, 1946); that is, that lyric poetry is the free and subjective expression of personal feeling in the form of song, based on recollection or memory. This recollection does not necessarily consist simply in a present evocation of the past (i.e. in an elegiac mood), but "Gegenwärtiges, Vergangenes, ja sogar künftiges kann in lyrischer Dichtung erinnert werden" (p. 67); moreover, as Staiger points out in his monograph on Goethe, the lyrical genre cannot flourish in a period when the poet's thinking is governed by strict formal norms and precepts: "Das Lyrische entzieht sich Gesetzen und dem Gebot der Vorbildlichkeit" (Goethe, Vol.3, p. 16).
- 5) W. Danckert, Goethe. Der mythische Urgrund seiner Weltanschauung, p. 509.



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1. Reference works - bibliographies, handbooks, etc.
2. Goethe's works - editions, anthologies, correspondence, etc.
3. Secondary literature on and relating to Goethe's works.
4. Secondary literature on imagery, symbolism, etc.
5. Secondary literature on the moon and related topics.

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